A

CHRONICLE

OF THE

CONQUEST OF GRANADA.

FROM THE MSS. OF FRAY ANTONIO AGAPIDA.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

LEGENDS OF THE CONQUEST OF SPAIN.

BY

WASHINGTON IRVING.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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INTRODUCTION.

ALTHOUGH the following chronicle bears the name of the venerable Fray Antonio Agapida, it is more properly a superstructure reared upon the fragments which remain of his work. It may be asked, who is this same Agapida, who is cited with such deference, yet whose name is not to be found in any of the catalogues of Spanish authors? The question is hard to answer: he appears to have been one of the many indefatigable writers who have filled the libraries of the convents and cathedrals of Spain with their tomes, without ever dreaming of bringing their labours to the press. He evidently was deeply and accurately informed of the particulars of the wars between his countrymen and the Moors, a tract of history but too much overgrown with the weeds of fable. His glowing zeal, also, in the cause of the Catholic faith, entitles him to be held up as a model of the good old orthodox chroniclers, who recorded, with such pious exultation, the united triumphs of the cross and the sword. It is deeply to be regretted, therefore, that his manuscripts, deposited in the libraries of various convents, have been dispersed during the late convulsions in Spain, so that nothing is now to be met of them but disjointed fragments. These, however, are too precious to be suffered to fall into oblivion, as they contain many curious facts not to be found in any other historian. In the following work, therefore, the manuscripts of the worthy Fray Antonio will be adopted, whenever they exist entire, but will be filled up, extended, illustrated, and corroborated, by citations from various authors, both Spanish and Arabian, who have treated of the subject. The manuscripts themselves are carefully preserved in the library of the Escurial.

Before entering upon the history, it may be as well to notice the opinions of certain of the most learned and devout

historiographers of former times relative to this war. Marinus Siculus, historian to Charles the Fifth, pronounces it a war to avenge the ancient injuries received by the Christians from the Moors, to recover the kingdom of Granada, and to extend the name and honour of the Christian religion.*

Estevan de Garibay, one of the most distinguished among the Spanish historians, regards the war as a special act of divine clemency towards the Moors; to the end that those barbarians and infidels, who had dragged out so many centuries under the diabolical oppression of the absurd sect of Mahomet, should at length be reduced to the Christian faith.†

Padre Mariana, also, a venerable Jesuit, and the most renowned historian of Spain, considers the past domination of the Moors as a scourge inflicted on the Spanish nation for its iniquities; but the triumphant war with Granada as the reward of Heaven, for its great act of propitiation in establishing the glorious tribunal of the Inquisition! "No sooner," says the worthy father, "was this holy office opened in Spain, than there instantly shone forth a resplendent light. Then it was, that, through divine favour, the nation increased in power, and became competent to overthrow and trample down the domination of the Moors."‡

Having thus cited high and venerable authority for considering this war in the light of one of those pious enterprises denominated crusades, we trust we have said enough to engage the Christian reader to follow us into the field, and to stand by us to the very issue of the contest.

* Lucio Marino Siculo, Cosas Memoriabiles de España, lib. xx.

† Garibay, Compend. Hist. España, lib. xviii. c. 22.

‡ Mariana, Hist. España, lib. xxv. c. 1.

CONTENTS.

CONTENTS.

APPENDIX.



A CHRONICLE

OF THE

CONQUEST OF GRANADA.

CHAPTER I.

The history of those desperate and bloody wars, observes Fray Antonio Agapida, which have filled the world with rumour and astonishment, and have determined the fate of mighty empires, has ever been considered as a theme worthy of the pen of the philosopher and the study of the sage. What then must be the history of a holy war, or rather, a pious crusade, waged by the most catholic of sovereigns, for the restoration of the light of the true faith to one of the most beautiful but benighted regions of the globe? Listen, then, while from the solitude of my cell I narrate the events of the conquest of Granada, where Christian knight and turbaned infidel disputed hand to hand every inch of the fair land of Andalusia, until the crescent, that symbol of heathenish abomination, was cast into the dust, and the blessed cross, the tree of our redemption, erected in its stead.

Upwards of eight hundred years were past and gone since the Arabian invaders sealed the perdition of Spain, by the defeat of Don Roderick, the last of her Gothic kings. From the period of that disastrous event, kingdom after kingdom had been gradually recovered by the Christian princes, until the single, but powerful, territory of Granada alone remained under the domination of the Moors.

This renowned kingdom was situate in the southern part of Spain, bordering on the Mediterranean Sea, and defended on the land side by lofty and rugged mountains, locking up within their embraces, deep, rich, and verdant valleys, where the sterility of the surrounding heights was repaid by prodigal fertility.

The city of Granada lay in the centre of the kingdom, sheltered as it were in the lap of the Sierra Nevada, or chain of snowy mountains. It covered two lofty hills, and a deep

valley that divides them, through which flows the river Darro. One of these hills was crowned by the royal palace and fortress of the Alhambra, capable of containing forty thousand men within its walls and towers. There is a Moorish tradition, that the king who built this mighty pile was skilled in the occult sciences, and furnished himself with gold and silver for the purpose by means of alchymy.* Certainly never was there an edifice accomplished in a superior style of barbaric magnificence; and the stranger who, even at the present day, wanders among its silent and deserted courts and ruined halls, gazes with astonishment at its gilded and fretted domes and luxurious decorations, still retaining their brilliancy and beauty, in defiance of the ravages of time.

Opposite to the hill on which stood the Alhambra was its rival hill, on the summit of which was a spacious plain, covered with houses, and crowded with inhabitants. It was commanded by a fortress called the Alcazaba. The declivities and skirts of these hills were covered with houses to the number of seventy thousand, separated by narrow streets and small squares, according to the custom of Moorish cities. The houses had interior courts and gardens, refreshed by fountains and running streams, and set out with oranges, citrons, and pomegranates; so that, as the edifices of the city rose above each other on the sides of the hill, they presented a mingled appearance of city and grove, delightful to the eye. The whole was surrounded by high walls, three leagues in circuit, with twelve gates, and fortified by a thousand and thirty towers. The elevation of the city, and the neighbourhood of the Sierra Nevada, crowned with perpetual snows, tempered the fervid rays of summer; and thus, while other cities were panting with the sultry and stifling heat of the dog-days, the most salubrious breezes played through the marble halls of Granada.

The glory of the city, however, was its vega, or plain, which spread out to a circumference of thirty-seven leagues, surrounded by lofty mountains. It was a vast garden of delight, refreshed by numerous fountains, and by the silver windings of the Xenil. The labour and ingenuity of the Moors had diverted the waters of this river into thousands of rills and streams, and diffused them over the whole surface of the plain. Indeed they had wrought up this happy region to

* Zurita, lib. xx. c. 42.

a degree of wonderful prosperity, and took a pride in decorating it, as if it had been a favourite mistress. The hills were clothed with orchards and vineyards, the valleys embroidered with gardens, and the wide plains covered with waving grain. Here were seen in profusion the orange, the citron, the fig and pomegranate, with large plantations of mulberry trees, from which was produced the finest of silk. The vine clambered from tree to tree, the grapes hung in rich clusters about the peasant's cottage, and the groves were rejoiced by the perpetual song of the nightingale. In a word, so beautiful was the earth, so pure the air, and so serene the sky of this delicious region, that the Moors imagined the paradise of their prophet to be situate in that part of the heaven which overhung the kingdom of Granada.*

This rich and populous territory had been left in quiet possession of the infidels, on condition of an annual tribute to the sovereign of Castile and Leon of two thousand doblas or pistoles of gold, and sixteen hundred Christian captives, or, in defect of captives, an equal number of Moors to be surrendered as slaves; all to be delivered in the city of Cordova.†

At the era at which this chronicle commences, Ferdinand and Isabella, of glorious and happy memory, reigned over the united kingdom of Castile, Leon, and Arragon, and Muley Aben Hassan sat on the throne of Granada.

This Muley Aben Hassan had succeeded to his father Ismael in 1465, while Henry IV., brother and immediate predecessor of Queen Isabella, was king of Castile and Leon. He was of the illustrious lineage of Mohammed Aben Alamar, the first Moorish king of Granada, and was the most potent of his line. He had, in fact, augmented in power in consequence of the fall of other Moorish kingdoms, which had been conquered by the Christians. Many cities and strong places of the kingdoms which lay contiguous to Granada had refused to submit to Christian vassalage, and had sheltered themselves under the protection of Muley Aben Hassan. His territories had thus increased in wealth, extent, and population, beyond all former example; and contained fourteen cities, and ninety-seven fortified towns, besides numerous unwalled towns and villages, defended by formidable castles. The spirit of Muley Aben Hassan swelled with his possessions.

* Juan Botero Benes, Relaciones Universales del Mundo.

† Garibay, Compend. lib. iv. c. 25.

The tribute of money and captives had been regularly paid by his father Ismael, and Muley Aben Hassan had, on one occasion, attended personally in Cordova at the payment. He had witnessed the taunts and sneers of the haughty Castilians, and so indignant was the proud son of Afric at what he considered a degradation of his race, that his blood boiled, whenever he recollected the humiliating scene.

When he came to the throne, he ceased all payment of the tribute, and it was sufficient to put him in a transport of rage only to mention it. "He was a fierce and warlike infidel," says the catholic Fray Antonio Agapida; "his bitterness against the holy Christian faith had been signalized in battle during the lifetime of his father, and the same diabolical spirit of hostility was apparent in his ceasing to pay this most righteous tribute."

CHAPTER II.

In the year 1478, a Spanish cavalier of powerful frame and haughty demeanour arrived at the gates of Granada as ambassador from the catholic monarchs, to demand the arrear of tribute. His name was Don Juan de Vera, a zealous and devout knight, full of ardour for the faith and loyalty for the crown. He was gallantly mounted, armed at all points, and followed by a moderate but well-appointed retinue.

The Moorish inhabitants looked jealously at this small but proud array of Spanish chivalry, as it paraded, with that stateliness possessed only by Spanish cavaliers, through the renowned gate of Elvira. They were struck with the stern and lofty demeanour of Don Juan de Vera, and his sinewy frame, which showed him formed for hardy deeds of arms; and they supposed he had come in search of distinction, by defying the Moorish knights in open tourney, or in the famous tilt with reeds for which they were so renowned. For it was still the custom of the knights of either nation to mingle in these courteous and chivalrous contests, during the intervals of war. When they learned, however, that he was come to demand the tribute so abhorrent to the ears of the fiery monarch, they observed, that it required a warrior of his apparent nerve to execute such an embassy.

Muley Aben Hassan received the cavalier in state, seated

on a magnificent divan, and surrounded by the officers of his court, in the Hall of Ambassadors, one of the most sumptuous apartments of the Alhambra. When De Vera had delivered his message, a haughty and bitter smile curled the lip of the fierce monarch. "Tell your sovereigns," said he, "that the kings of Granada, who used to pay tribute in money to the Castilian crown, are dead. Our mint at present coins nothing but blades of cimeters and heads of lances.*"

The defiance couched in this proud reply was heard with stern and lofty courtesy by Don Juan de Vera; for he was a bold soldier, and a devout hater of the infidels, and he saw iron war in the words of the Moorish monarch. He retired from the audience chamber with stately and ceremonious gravity, being master of all points of etiquette As he passed through the Court of Lions, and paused to regard its celebrated fountain, he fell into a discourse with the Moorish courtiers on certain mysteries of the Christian faith. The arguments advanced by these infidels, says Fray Antonio Agapida, awakened the pious indignation of this most Christian knight and discreet ambassador, but still he restrained himself within the limits of lofty gravity, leaning on the pommel of his sword, and looking down with ineffable scorn upon the weak casuists around him. The quick and subtle Arabian witlings redoubled their light attacks upon that stately Spaniard, and thought they had completely foiled him in the contest; but the stern Juan de Vera had an argument in reserve, for which they were but little prepared; for on one of them, of the race of the Abencerrages, daring to question, with a sneer, the immaculate conception of the blessed Virgin, the catholic knight could no longer restrain his ire. Elevating his voice of a sudden, he told the infidel he lied, and raising his arm at the same time, he smote him on the head with his sheathed sword.

In an instant the Court of Lions glistened with the flash of arms, and its fountains would have been dyed with blood, had not Muley Aben Hassan overheard the tumult, and forbade all appeal to force, pronouncing the person of the ambassador sacred, while within his territories. The Abencerrage treasured up the remembrance of the insult until an hour of vengeance should arrive, and the ambassador prayed our blessed

* Garibay, Compend. lib. xl. c. 29. Conde, Hist. de los Arabes, p. iv. c. 34.

Lady to grant him an opportunity of proving her immaculate conception on the head of this turbaned infidel.*

Notwithstanding this occurrence, Don Juan de Vera was treated with great distinction by Muley Aben Hassan; but nothing could make him unbend from his stern and stately reserve. Before his departure, a cimeter was sent to him by the king; the blade of the finest Damascus steel; the hilt of agate, enriched with precious stones, and the guard of gold. De Vera drew it, and smiled grimly as he noticed the admirable temper of the blade. "His majesty has given me a trenchant weapon," said he: "I trust a time will come, when I may show him, that I know how to use his royal present." The reply was considered as a compliment of course; the bystanders little knew the bitter hostility that lay couched beneath.

Don Juan de Vera and his companions, during his brief sojourn at Granada, scanned the force and situation of the Moor with the eyes of practised warriors. They saw that he was well prepared for hostilities. His walls and towers were of vast strength, in complete repair, and mounted with lombards and other heavy ordnance. His magazines were well stored with all the munitions of war: he had a mighty host of foot soldiers, together with squadrons of cavalry, ready to scour the country, and carry on either defensive or predatory warfare. The Christian warriors noted these things without dismay; their hearts rather glowed with emulation at the thoughts of encountering so worthy a foe. As they slowly pranced through the streets of Granada on their departure, they looked round with eagerness on its stately palaces and sumptuous mosques; on its alcayceria or bazar, crowded with silks and cloth of silver and gold, with jewels and precious stones, and other rich merchandise, the luxuries of every clime: and they longed for the time, when all this wealth should be the spoil of the soldiers of the faith, and when each tramp of their steeds might be fetlock deep in the blood and carnage of the infidels.

Don Juan de Vera and his little band pursued their way slowly through the country to the Christian frontier. Every

* The curate of Los Palacios also records this anecdote, but mentions it as happening on a subsequent occasion, when Don Juan de Vera was sent to negociate for certain Christian captives. There appears every reason, however, to consider Fray Antonio Agapida correct in the period to which he refers it.

town was strongly fortified. The vega was studded with towers of refuge for the peasantry; every pass of the mountain had its castle of defence, every lofty height its watchtower. As the Christian cavaliers passed under the walls of the fortresses, lances and cimeters flashed from their battlements, and the turbaned sentinels seemed to dart from their dark eyes glances of hatred and defiance. It was evident, that a war with this kingdom must be one of doughty peril and valiant enterprise; a war of posts, where every step must be gained by toil and bloodshed, and maintained with the utmost difficulty. The warrior spirit of the cavaliers kindled with the thoughts, and they were impatient for hostilities; "not," says Antonio Agapida, "from any thirst for rapine and revenge, but from that pure and holy indignation, which every Spanish knight entertained at beholding this beautiful dominion of his ancestors defiled by the footsteps of infidel usurpers." "It was impossible," he adds, "to contemplate this delicious country, and not long to see it restored to the dominion of the true faith, and the sway of the Christian monarchs."

CHAPTER III.

The defiance, thus hurled at the Castilian sovereigns by the fiery Moorish king, would at once have been answered by the thunder of their artillery, but they were embroiled at that time in a war with Portugal, and in contests with their own factious nobles. The truce, therefore, which had existed for many years between the nations, was suffered to continue; the wary Ferdinand reserving the refusal to pay tribute as a fair ground for war, whenever the favourable moment to wage it should arrive.

In the course of three years the war with Portugal was terminated, and the factions of the Spanish nobles were for the most part quelled. The Castilian sovereigns now turned their thoughts to what, from the time of the union of their crowns, had been the great object of their ambition, the conquest of Granada, and the complete extirpation of the Moorish power from Spain. Ferdinand, whose pious zeal was quickened by motives of temporal policy, looked with a craving eye at the rich territory of the Moor, studded with innumerable towns and cities. He determined to carry on the war

with cautious and persevering patience, taking town after town, and fortress after fortress, and gradually plucking away all the supports, before he attempted the Moorish capital. "I will pick out the seeds, one by one, of this pomegranate," said the wary Ferdinand.*

Muley Aben Hassan was aware of the hostile intentions of the catholic monarch, but felt confident in his means of resisting them. He had amassed great wealth during a tranquil reign; he had strengthened the defences of his kingdom, and had drawn large bodies of auxiliary troops from Barbary, besides making arrangements with the African princes to assist him with supplies in case of emergency. His subjects were fierce of spirit, stout of heart, and valiant of hand. Inured to the exercise of war, they could fight skilfully on foot, but above all were dexterous horsemen, whether heavily armed and fully appointed, or lightly mounted, *á la geneta*, with simply lance and target. They were patient of fatigue, hunger, thirst, and nakedness; prompt for war at the first summons of their king, and tenacious in defence of their towns and possessions.

Thus amply provided for war, Muley Aben Hassan determined to be beforehand with the politic Ferdinand, and to be the first to strike a blow. In the truce which existed between them, there was a singular clause, permitting either party to make sudden inroads and assaults upon towns and fortresses, provided they were done furtively and by stratagem, without display of banners, or sound of trumpet, or regular encampment, and that they did not last above three days.† This gave rise to frequent enterprises of a hardy and adventurous character, in which castles and strongholds were taken by surprise, and carried sword in hand. A long time had elapsed, however, without any outrage of the kind on the part of the Moors, and the Christian towns on the frontier had all, in consequence, fallen into a state of the most negligent security.

Muley Aben Hassan cast his eyes round to select his object of attack, when information was brought him that the fortress of Zahara was but feebly garrisoned and scantily supplied, and that its alcayde was careless of his charge. This important post was on the frontier, between Ronda and Medina

* Granada is the Spanish term for pomegranate.

† Zurita, Annales de Arragon, lib. xx. c. 41. Mariana, Hist. de España, lib. xxv. c. 1.

Sidonia, and was built on the crest of a rocky mountain, with a strong castle perched above it, upon a cliff so high that it was said to be above the flight of birds, or drift of clouds. The streets, and many of the houses, were mere excavations, wrought out of the living rock. The town had but one gate, opening to the west, and defended by towers and bulwarks. The only ascent to this cragged fortress, was by roads cut in the rock, and so rugged as in many places to resemble broken stairs. Such was the situation of the mountain fortress of Zahara, which seemed to set all attack at defiance, insomuch that it had become so proverbial throughout Spain, that a woman of forbidding and inaccessible virtue was called a Zahareña. But the strongest fortress and sternest virtue have their weak points, and require unremitting vigilance to guard them: let warrior and dame take warning from the fate of Zahara.

CHAPTER IV.

It was in the year of our Lord one thousand four hundred and eighty-one, and but a night or two after the festival of the most blessed Nativity, that Muley Aben Hassan made his famous attack upon Zahara. The inhabitants of the place were sunk in profound sleep; the very sentinel had deserted his post, and sought shelter from a tempest, which had raged for three nights in succession; for it appeared but little probable, that an enemy would be abroad during such an uproar of the elements. But evil spirits work best during a storm, observes the worthy Antonio Agapida; and Muley Aben Hassen found such a season most suitable for his diabolical purposes. In the midst of the night, an uproar arose within the walls of Zahara, more awful than the raging of the storm. A fearful alarm cry, "The Moor! the Moor!" resounded through the streets, mingled with the clash of arms, the shriek of anguish, and the shout of victory. Muley Aben Hassan, at the head of a powerful force, had hurried from Granada, and passed unobserved through the mountains in the obscurity of the tempest. When the storm pelted the sentinel from his post, and howled round tower and battlement, the moors had planted their scaling ladders, and mounted securely into both town and castle. The garrison was unsuspicious of danger until battle and massacre burst forth within its very walls.

It seemed to the affrighted inhabitants, as if the fiends of the air had come upon the wings of the wind, and possessed themselves of tower and turret. The war cry resounded on every side, shout answering shout, above, below, on the battlements of the castle, in the streets of the town; the foe was in all parts, wrapped in obscurity, but acting in concert by the aid of preconcerted signals. Starting from sleep, the soldiers were intercepted, and cut down, as they rushed from their quarters, or, if they escaped, they knew not where to assemble or where to strike. Wherever lights appeared, the flashing cimeter was at its deadly work, and all who attempted resistance fell beneath its edge.

In a little while, the struggle was at an end. Those who were not slain took refuge in the secret places of their houses, or gave themselves up as captives. The clash of arms ceased, and the storm continued its howling, mingled with the occasional shout of the Moorish soldiery, roaming in search of plunder. While the inhabitants were trembling for their fate, a trumpet resounded through the streets, summoning them all to assemble, unarmed, in the public square. Here they were surrounded by soldiery, and strictly guarded until daybreak. When the day dawned, it was piteous to behold this once prosperous community, which had lain down to rest in peaceful security, now crowded together without distinction of age, or rank, or sex, and almost without raiment, during the severity of a wintry storm. The fierce Muley Aben Hassan turned a deaf ear to all their prayers and remonstrances, and ordered them to be conducted captives to Granada. Leaving a strong garrison in both town and castle, with orders to put them in a complete state of defence, he returned, flushed with victory, to his capital, entering it at the head of his troops, laden with spoil, and bearing in triumph the banners and pennons taken at Zahara.

While preparations were making for jousts and other festivities in honour of this victory over the Christians, the captives of Zahara arrived; a wretched train of men. women, and children, worn out with fatigue, and haggard wtih despair, and driven like cattle into the city gates by a detachment of Moorish soldiery.

Deep were the grief and indignation of the people of Granada at this cruel scene. Old men, who had experienced the calamities of warfare, anticipated coming troubles. Mothers

clasped their infants to their breasts, as they beheld the hapless females of Zahara, with their children expiring in their arms. On every side the accents of pity for the sufferers were mingled with execrations of the barbarity of the king. The preparations for festivity were neglected, and the viands, which were to have feasted the conquerors, were distributed among the captives.

The nobles and alfaquis, however, repaired to the Alhambra to congratulate the king; for whatever storm may rage in the lower regions of society, rarely do any clouds, but clouds of incense, rise to the awful eminence of the throne. In this instance, however, a voice rose from the midst of the obsequious crowd, that burst like thunder upon the ears of Aben Hassan. "Wo! wo! wo! to Granada!" exclaimed the voice, "its hour of desolation approaches! The ruins of Zahara will fall upon our heads: my spirit tells me, that the end of our empire is at hand!" All shrunk back aghast, and left the denouncer of wo standing alone in the centre of the hall. He was an ancient and hoary man, in the rude attire of a dervise. Age had withered his form, without quenching the fire of his spirit, which glared in baleful lustre from his eyes. He was, says the Arabian historians, one of those holy men termed santons, who pass their lives in hermitages, in fasting, meditation, and prayer, until they attain to the purity of saints, and the foresight of prophets. "He was," says the indignant Fray Antonio Agapida, "a son of Belial, one of those fanatic infidels possessed of the devil, who are sometimes permitted to predict the truth to their followers; but with the proviso, that their predictions shall be of no avail."

The voice of the santon resounded through the lofty hall of the Alhambra, and struck silence and awe into the crowd of courtly sycophants. Muley Aben Hassan alone was unmoved. He eyed the hoary anchorite with scorn, as he stood dauntless before him, and treated his predictions as the raving of a maniac. The santon rushed from the royal presence, and descending into the city, hurried through its streets and squares with frantic gesticulations. His voice was heard in every part in awful denunciation. "The peace is broken, the exterminating war is commenced. Wo! wo! wo! to Granada! its fall is at hand! desolation shall dwell in its palaces, its strong men shall fall beneath the sword, its children and

maidens shall be led into captivity! Zahara is but a type of Granada!"

Terror seized upon the populace; for they considered these ravings as the inspirations of prophecy. They hid themselves in their dwellings, as in a time of general mourning; or, if they went abroad, it was to gather together in knots in the streets and squares, to alarm each other with dismal forebodings, and to curse the rashness and cruelty of the fierce Aben Hassan.

The Moorish monarch heeded not their murmurs. Knowing that his exploit must draw upon him the vengeance of the Christians, he now threw off all reserve, and made attempts to surprise Castellar and Olvera, though without success. He sent alfaquis, also, to the Barbary powers, informing them, that the sword was drawn, and inviting them, to aid in maintaining the kingdom of Granada, and the religion of Mahomet, against the violence of unbelievers.

CHAPTER V.

Great was the indignation of King Ferdinand, when he heard of the storming of Zahara, more especially as it anticipated his intention of giving the first blow in this eventful war. He valued himself upon his deep and prudent policy; and there is nothing which politic monarchs can less forgive, than thus being forestalled by an adversary. He immediately issued orders to all the adelantados and alcaydes of the frontiers, to maintain the utmost vigilance at their several posts, and to prepare to carry fire and sword into the territories of the Moors, while he despatched friars of different orders, to stir up the chivalry of Christendom to take part in this holy crusade against the infidels.

Among the many valiant cavaliers who rallied round the throne of Ferdinand and Isabella, one of the most eminent in rank and renowned in arms was Don Roderigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz. As he was the distinguished champion of this holy war, and commanded in most of its enterprises and battles, it is meet that some particular account should be given of him. He was born in 1443, of the valiant lineage of the Ponces, and from his earliest youth had rendered himself illustrious in the field. He was of the middle stature, with a muscular and powerful frame, capable of great exertion and fatigue. His hair and beard were red and

curled, his countenance was open and magnanimous, of a ruddy complexion, and slightly marked with the smallpox. He was temperate, chaste, valorous, vigilant; a just and generous master to his vassals; frank and noble in his deportment towards his equals; loving and faithful to his friends; fierce and terrible, yet magnanimous, to his enemies. He was considered the mirror of chivalry of his times, and compared by contemporary historians to the immortal Cid.

The Marquis of Cadiz had vast possessions in the most fertile parts of Andalusia, including many towns and castles; and could lead forth an army into the field from his own vassals and dependents. On receiving the orders of the king, he burned to signalize himself by some sudden incursion into the kingdom of Granada, that should give a brilliant commencement to the war, and console the sovereigns for the insult they had received on the capture of Zahara. As his estates lay near the Moorish frontiers, and were subject to sudden inroads, he had always in his pay numbers of adalides, or scouts and guides, many of them converted Moors. These he sent out in all directions, to watch the movements of the enemy, and to procure all kinds of information important to the security of the frontier. One of these spies came to him one day in his town of Marchena, and informed him, that the Moorish town of Alhama was slightly garrisoned, and negligently guarded, and might be taken by surprise. This was a large, wealthy, and populous place, within a few leagues of Granada. It was situate on a rocky height, nearly surrounded by a river, and defended by a fortress, to which there was no access but by a steep and cragged ascent. The strength of its situation, and its being imbosomed in the centre of the kingdom, had produced the careless security which now invited attack.

To ascertain fully the state of the fortress, the marquis secretly despatched thither a veteran soldier who was highly in his confidence. His name was Ortega de Prado; a man of great activity, shrewdness, and valour, and captain of escaladores, or those employed to scale the walls of fortresses in time of attack. Ortega approached Alhama one moonless night, and paced along its walls with noiseless step, laying his ear occasionally to the ground or to the wall. Every time he distinguished the measured tread of a sentinel, and now and then the challenge of the nightwatch going its rounds. Find-

ing the town thus guarded, he clambered to the castle. There all was silent: as he ranged its lofty battlements, between him and the sky, he saw no sentinel on duty. He noticed certain places where the wall might be ascended by scaling ladders; and having marked the hour of relieving guard, and made all necessary observations, he retired without being discovered.

Ortega returned to Marchena, and assured the Marquis of Cadiz of the practicability of scaling the castle of Alhama, and taking it by surprise. The marquis had a secret conference with Don Pedro Henriquez, adelantado of Andalusia, Don Diego de Merlo, commander of Seville, and Sancho de Avila, alcayde of Carmona, who all agreed to aid him with their forces. On an appointed day the several commanders assembled at Marchena with their troops and retainers. None but the leaders knew the object or destination of the enterprise, but it was enough to rouse the Andalusian spirit to know that a foray was intended into the country of their old enemies the Moors. Secrecy and celerity were necessary for success. They set out promptly, with three thousand genetes or light cavalry, and four thousand infantry. They chose a route but little travelled, by the way of Antiquera, passing with great labour through rugged and solitary defiles of the sierra or chain of mountains of Alzerifa, and left all their baggage on the banks of the river Yeguas, to be brought after them. Their march was principally in the night; all day they remained quiet; no noise was suffered in their camp, and no fires were made, lest the smoke should betray them. On the third day they resumed their march as the evening darkened, and forcing themselves forward at as quick a pace as the rugged and dangerous mountain roads would permit, they descended towards midnight into a small deep valley, only half a league from Alhama. Here they made a halt, fatigued by this forced march during a long dark evening towards the end of February.

The Marquis of Cadiz now explained to the troops the object of the expedition. He told them, it was for the glory of their most holy faith, and to avenge the wrongs of their countrymen of Zahara; and that the rich town of Alhama, full of wealthy spoil, was the place to be attacked. The troops were roused to new ardour by these words, and desired to be led forthwith to the assault. They arrived close

to Alhama about two hours before daybreak. Here the army remained in ambush, while three hundred men were despatched to scale the walls and take possession of the castle. They were picked men, many of them alcaydes and officers, men who preferred death to dishonour. This gallant band was guided by the escalador, Ortega de Prado, at the head of thirty men with scaling ladders. They clambered the ascent to the castle in silence, and arrived under the dark shadow of its towers without being discovered. Not a light was to be seen, not a sound to be heard; the whole place was wrapped in profound repose.

Fixing their ladders, they ascended cautiously and with noiseless steps. Ortega was the first that mounted upon the battlements, followed by one Martin Galindo, a youthful squire, full of spirit, and eager for distinction. Moving stealthily along the parapet to the portal of the citadel, they came upon the sentinel by surprise. Ortega seized him by the throat, brandished a dagger before his eyes, and ordered him to point the way to the guard-room. The infidel obeyed, and was instantly despatched, to prevent his giving any alarm. The guard-room was a scene rather of massacre than combat. Some of the soldiery were killed while sleeping, others were cut down almost without resistance, bewildered by so unexpected an assault: all were despatched, for the scaling party was too small to make prisoners or to spare. The alarm spread throughout the castle; but by this time the three hundred picked men had mounted the battlements. The garrison, startled from sleep, found the enemy already masters of the towers. Some of the Moors were cut down at once, others fought desperately from room to room, and the whole castle resounded with the clash of arms, the cries of the combatants, and the groans of the wounded. The army in ambush, finding by the uproar that the castle was surprised, now rushed from their concealment, and approached the walls with loud shouts and sound of kettledrums and trumpets, to increase the confusion and dismay of the garrison. A violent conflict took place in the court of the castle, where several of the scaling party sought to throw open the gates to admit their countrymen. Here fell two valiant alcaydes, Nicholas de Roja and Sancho de Avila, but they fell honourably, upon a heap of slain. At length Ortega de Prado succeeded in throwing open a postern, through which the

Marquis of Cadiz, the adelantado of Andalusia, and Don Diego de Merlo entered with a host of followers, and the citadel remained in full possession of the Christians.

As the Spanish cavaliers were ranging from room to room, the Marquis of Cadiz entered an apartment of superior richness to the rest, beheld, by the light of a silver lamp, a beautiful Moorish female, the wife of the alcayde of the castle, whose husband was absent, attending a wedding feast at Velez Malaga. She would have fled at the sight of a Christian warrior in her apartment, but, entangled in the covering of the bed, she fell at the feet of the marquis, imploring mercy. The Christian cavalier, who had a soul full of honour and courtesy towards the sex, raised her from the earth, and endeavoured to allay her fears; but they were increased at the sight of her female attendants, pursued into the room by the Spanish soldiery. The marquis reproached his soldiers for their unmanly conduct, and reminded them, that they made war upon men, not on defenceless women. Having soothed the terrors of the females by the promise of honourable protection, he appointed a trusty guard to watch over the security of their apartment.

The castle was now taken, but the town below it was in arms. It was broad day, and the people, recovered from their panic, were enabled to see and estimate the force of the enemy. The inhabitants were chiefly merchants and tradespeople; but the Moors all possessed a knowledge of the use of weapons, and were of brave and warlike spirit. They confided in the strength of their walls, and the certainty of speedy relief from Granada, which was but about eight leagues distant. Manning the battlements and towers, they discharged showers of stones and arrows, whenever the part of the Christian army without the walls attempted to approach. They barricaded the entrances of their streets also, which opened towards the castle, stationing men expert at the crossbow and arquebuse. These kept up a constant fire upon the gate of the castle, so that no one could sally forth without being instantly wounded or killed. Two valiant cavaliers who attempted to lead forth a party in defiance of this fatal tempest, were shot dead at the very portal.

The Christians now found themselves in a situation of great peril. Reinforcements must soon arrive to the enemy from Granada. Unless, therefore, they gained possession of the

town in the course of the day, they were likely to be surrounded and beleaguered, and with scarcely any provisions in the castle. Some observed, that, even if they took the town, they should not be able to keep possession of it. They proposed, therefore, to make booty of every thing valuable, to sack the castle, set it on fire, and make good their retreat to Seville.

The Marquis of Cadiz was of different council. "God has given the citadel into Christian hands," said he; "he will no doubt strengthen them to maintain it. We have gained the place with difficulty and bloodshed; it would be a stain upon our honour to abandon it through fear of imaginary dangers." The adelantado and Don Diego de Merlo joined in his opinion; but, without their earnest and united remonstrances, the place would have been abandoned; so exhausted were the troops by forced marches and hard fighting, and so apprehensive of the approach of the Moors of Granada.

The strength and spirits of the party within the castle were in some degree restored by the provisions which they found. The Christian army beneath the town, being also refreshed by a morning repast, advanced vigorously to the attack of the walls. They planted their scaling ladders, and, swarming up, fought fiercely with the Moorish soldiery upon the ramparts.

In the mean time, the Marquis of Cadiz, seeing that the gate of the castle which opened towards the city was completely commanded by the artillery of the enemy, ordered a large breach to be made in the wall, through which he might lead his troops to the attack; animating them in this perilous moment by assuring them, that the place should be given up to plunder, and its inhabitants made captives.

The breach being made, the marquis put himself at the head of his troops, and entered sword in hand. A simultaneous attack was made by the Christians in every part, by the ramparts, by the gate, by the roofs and walls which connected the castle with the town. The Moors fought valiantly in their streets, from their windows, and from the tops of their houses. They were not equal to the Christians in bodily strength; for they were for the most part peaceful men, of industrious callings, and enervated by the frequent use of the warm bath; but they were superior in number, and unconquerable in spirit; old and young, strong and weak, fought

with the same desperation. The Moors fought for property, for liberty, for life. They fought at their thresholds and their hearths with the shrieks of their wives and children ringing in their ears, and they fought in the hope, that each moment would bring aid from Granada. They regarded neither their own wounds nor the deaths of their companions, but continued fighting until they fell; and seemed as if, when they could no longer contend, they would block up the threshholds of their beloved homes with their mangled bodies. The Christians fought for glory, for revenge, for the holy faith, and for the spoil of these wealthy infidels. Success would place a rich town at their mercy, failure would deliver them into the hands of the tyrant of Granada.

The contest raged from morning until night, when the Moors began to yield. Retreating to a large mosque near the walls, they kept up so galling a fire from it with lances, crossbows, and arquebuses, that for some time the Christians dared not approach. Covering themselves at length with bucklers and madtelets* to protect them from the deadly shower, they made their way to the mosque, and set fire to the doors. When the smoke and flames rolled in upon them, the Moors gave all up as lost. Many rushed forth desperately upon the enemy, but were immediately slain; the rest surrendered.

The struggle was now at an end; the town remained at the mercy of the Christians, and the inhabitants, both male and female, became slaves of those who made them prisoners. Some few escaped by a mine or subterranean way which led to the river, and concealed themselves, their wives and children, in caves and secret places, but in three or four days were compelled to surrender themselves through hunger.

The town was given up to plunder, and the booty was immense. There were found prodigious quantities of gold, and silver, and jewels, and rich silks, and costly stuffs of all kinds, together with horses and beeves, and abundance of grain, and oil, and honey, and all other productions of this fruitful kingdom; for in Alhama were collected the royal rents and tributes of the surrounding country: it was the richest town in the Moorish territory, and from its great strength and peculiar situation, was called the key to Granada.

* Mantelet is a moveable parapet, made of thick planks, to protect troops when advancing to sap or assault a walled place.

Great waste and devastation were committed by the Spanish soldiery, for, thinking it would be impossible to keep possession of the place, they began to demolish whatever they could not take away. Immense jars of oil were destroyed, costly furniture shattered to pieces, and magazines of grain broken open, and their contents scattered to the winds. Many Christian captives, who had been taken at Zahara, were found buried in a Moorish dungeon, and were triumphantly restored to light and liberty, and a renegado Spaniard, who had often served as guide to the Moors in their incursions into the Christian territories, was hanged on the highest part of the battlements, for the edification of the army.

CHAPTER VI.

A MOORISH horseman had spurred across the vega, nor did he rein his panting steed until he alighted at the gate of the Alhambra. He brought tidings to Muley Aben Hassan of the attack upon Alhama. "The Christians," said he, "are in the land. They came upon us, we know not whence or how, and scaled the walls of the castle in the night. There has been dreadful fighting and carnage on its towers and courts, and when I spurred my steed from the gate of Alhama, the castle was in possession of the unbelievers."

Muley Aben Hassan felt for a moment as if swift retribution had come upon him for the woes he had inflicted upon Zahara. Still he flattered himself that this had only been some transient inroad of a party of marauders, intent upon plunder, and that a little succour thrown into the town would be sufficient to expel them from the castle, and drive them from the land. He ordered out, therefore, a thousand of his chosen cavalry, and sent them in all speed to the assistance of Alhama. They arrived before its walls the morning after its capture. The Christian standards floated upon the towers, and a body of cavalry poured forth from its gates, and came wheeling down into the plain to receive them.

The Moorish horsemen turned the reins of their steeds and galloped back for Granada. They entered its gates in tumultuous confusion, spreading terror and lamentation by their tidings. "Alhama is fallen! Alhama is fallen!" exclaimed they; "the Christians garrison its walls; the key of Granada is in the hands of the enemy!"

When the people heard these words, they remembered the denunciation of the santon: his prediction seemed still to resound in every ear, and its fulfilment to be at hand. Nothing was heard throughout the city but sighs and wailings. "Woe is me, Alhama!" was in every mouth, and this ejaculation of deep sorrow and doleful foreboding came to be the burden of a plaintive ballad, which remains to the present day.*

Many aged men, who had taken refuge in Granada from other Moorish dominions which had fallen into the power of the Christians, now groaned in despair at the thought, that war was to follow them into this last retreat, to lay waste this pleasant land, and to bring trouble and sorrow upon their declining years. The women were more loud and vehement in their grief, for they beheld the evils impending over their children, and what can restrain the agony of a mother's heart? Many of them made their way through the halls of the Alhambra into the presence of the king, weeping, and wailing, and tearing their hair. "Accursed be the day," cried they, "when the flame of war was kindled by thee in our land! May the holy prophet bear witness before Allah, that we and our children are innocent of this act! Upon thy head, and upon the heads of thy posterity, to the end of the world, rest the sin of the desolation of Zahara!"†

Muley Aben Hassan remained unmoved amidst all this storm: his heart was hardened, observes Fray Antonio Agapida, like that of Pharaoh, to the end that through his blind violence and rage he might produce the deliverance of the land from its heathen bondage. In fact, he was a bold and fearless warrior, and trusted soon to make this blow recoil upon the head of the enemy. He had ascertained that the captors of Alhama were but a handful; they were in the centre of his dominions, within a short distance of his capital. They were deficient in munitions of war, and provisions for sustaining a siege. By a rapid movement he might surround them with a powerful army, cut off all aid from their countrymen, and entrap them in the fortress they had taken.

To think was to act, with Muley Aben Hassan; but he was prone to act with too much precipitation. He immediately

* The mournful little Spanish romance of *Ay de mi, Alhama!* is supposed to be of Moorish origin, and to embody the grief of the people of Granada on this occasion.

† Caribray, lib. xl., c. 29.

set forth in person, with three thousand horse and fifty thousand foot, and, in his eagerness to arrive at the scene of action, would not wait to provide artillery and the various engines required in a siege. "The multitude of my forces," said he, confidently, "will be sufficient to overwhelm the enemy."

The Marquis of Cadiz, who thus held possession of Alhama, had a chosen friend and faithful companion in arms among the most distinguished of the Christian chivalry. This was Don Alonzo de Cordova, senior and lord of the house of Aguilar, and brother of Gonzalvo of Cordova, afterwards renowned as the grand captain of Spain. As yet Alonzo de Aguilar was the glory of his name and race, for his brother was but young in arms. He was one of the most hardy, valiant, and enterprising Spanish knights, and foremost in all service of a perilous and adventurous nature. He had not been at hand to accompany his friend Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz, in his inroad into the Moorish territory, but he hastily assembled a number of retainers, horse and foot, and pressed forward to join the enterprise. Arriving at the river Yeguas, he found the baggage of the army still upon its banks, and took charge of it to carry it to Alhama. The Marquis of Cadiz heard of the approach of his friend, whose march was slow, in consequence of being encumbered by the baggage. He was within but a few leagues of Alhama, when scouts came hurrying into the place with intelligence, that the Moorish king was at hand with a powerful army. The Marquis of Cadiz was filled with alarm lest De Aguilar should fall into the hands of the enemy. Forgetting his own danger, and thinking only of that of his friend, he despatched a well mounted messenger to ride full speed and warn him not to approach.

The first determination of Alonzo de Aguilar, when he heard that the Moorish king was at hand, was to take a strong position in the mountains, and await his coming. The madness of an attempt with his handful of men to oppose an immense army, was represented to him with such force as to induce him to abandon the idea. He then thought of throwing himself into Alhama, to share the fortunes of his friend. But it was now too late. The Moors would infallibly intercept him, and he should only give the marquis the additional distress of beholding him captured beneath his walls. It was even urged upon him that he had no time to delay, if he

would consult his own safety, which could only be ensured by an immediate retreat into the Christian territory. This last opinion was confirmed by the return of scouts, who brought information that Muley Aben Hassan had received notice of his movements, and was rapidly advancing in quest of him. It was with infinite reluctance that Don Alonzo de Aguilar yielded to these united and powerful reasons. Proudly and sullenly he drew off his forces, laden with the baggage of the army, and made an unwilling retreat towards Antequera. Muley Aben Hassan pursued him for some distance through the mountains, but soon gave up the chase, and turned with his forces upon Alhama.

As the army approached the town, they beheld the fields strewn with the dead bodies of their countrymen, who had fallen in defence of the place, and had been cast forth and left unburied by the Christians. There they lay, mangled and exposed to every indignity, while droves of half-famished dogs were preying upon them, and fighting and howling over their hideous repast.* Furious at the sight, the Moors, in the first transports of their rage, attacked these ravenous animals, and their next measure was to vent their fury upon the Christians. They rushed like madmen to the walls, applied scaling ladders in all parts, without waiting for the necessary mantelets and other protections, thinking, by attacking suddenly and at various points, to distract the enemy, and overcome them by the force of numbers.

The Marquis of Cadiz with his confederate commanders distributed themselves along the walls, to direct and animate their men in the defence. The Moors, in their blind fury, often assailed the most difficult and dangerous places. Darts, stones, and all kinds of missiles, were hurled down upon their unprotected heads. As fast as they mounted they were cut down, or dashed from the battlements, their ladders overturned, and all who were on them precipitated headlong below.

Muley Aben Hassan stormed with passion at the sight: he sent detachment after detachment to scale the walls; but in vain: they were like waves rushing upon a rock only to dash themselves to pieces. The Moors lay in heaps beneath the wall, and among them many of the bravest cavaliers of Granada. The Christians, also, sallied frequently from the gates, and made great havoc in the irregular multitude of assailants. On one of these occasions the party was commanded by Don

* Pulgar, Cronica.

Juan de Vera, the same pious and high-handed knight who had borne the embassy to Muley Aben Hassan demanding tribute. As this doughty cavalier, after a career of carnage, was slowly retreating to the gate, he heard a voice calling after him in furious accents. "Turn back! turn back!" cried the voice: "thou, who canst insult in hall, prove that thou canst combat in the field." Don Juan de Vera turned, and beheld the same Abencerrage whom he had struck with his sword in the Alhambra, for scoffing at the immaculate conception of the blessed Virgin. All his holy zeal and pious indignation rekindled at the sight: he put lance in rest, and spurred his steed, to finish this doctrinal dispute. Don Juan was a potent and irresistible arguer with his weapon; and he was aided, says Fray Antonio Agapida, by the peculiar virtue of his cause. At the very first encounter, his lance entered the mouth of the Moor, and hurled him to the earth, never more to utter word or breath. Thus, continues the worthy friar, did this scoffing infidel receive a well-merited punishment through the very organ with which he had offended, and thus was the immaculate conception miraculously vindicated from his foul aspersions.

The vigorous and successful defence of the Christians now made Muley Aben Hassan sensible of his error, in hurrying from Granada without the proper engines for a siege. Destitute of all means to batter the fortifications, the town remained uninjured, defying the mighty army which raged in vain before it. Incensed at being thus foiled, Muley Aben Hassan gave orders to undermine the walls. The Moors advanced with shouts to the attempt. They were received with a deadly fire from the ramparts, which drove them from their works. Repeatedly were they repulsed, and repeatedly did they return to the charge. The Christians not merely galled them from the battlements, but issued forth and cut them down in the excavations they were attempting to form. The contest lasted a whole day, and by evening two thousand Moors were either killed or wounded.

Muley Aben Hassan now abandoned all hope of carrying the place by assault; and attempted to distress it into terms, by turning the channel of the river which runs by its walls. On this stream the inhabitants depended for their supply of water, the place being destitute of fountains and cisterns, from which circumstance it is called Alhama *la seca*, or "the dry."

A desperate conflict ensued on the banks of the river; the

Moors endeavouring to plant palisadoes in its bed, to divert the stream, and the Christians striving to prevent them. The Spanish commanders exposed themselves to the utmost danger to animate their men, who were repeatedly driven back into the town. The Marquis of Cadiz was often up to his knees in the stream, fighting hand to hand with the Moors. The water ran red with blood, and was encumbered with dead bodies. At length, the overwhelming numbers of the Moors gave them the advantage, and they succeeded in diverting the greater part of the water. The Christians had to struggle severely to supply themselves from the feeble rill which remained. They sallied to the river by a subterraneous passage; but the Moorish cross-bowmen stationed themselves on the opposite bank, keeping up a heavy fire upon the Christians, whenever they attempted to fill their vessels from the scanty and turbid stream. One party of the Christians had therefore to fight, while another drew water. At all hours of day and night this deadly strife was maintained, until it seemed as if every drop of water were purchased with a drop of blood.

In the mean time the sufferings in the town became intense. None but the soldiery and their horses were allowed the precious beverage so dearly earned, and even that in quantities that only tantalized their wants. The wounded, who could not sally to procure it, were almost destitute; while the unhappy prisoners, shut up in the mosques, were reduced to frightful extremities. Many perished raving mad, fancying themselves swimming in boundless seas, yet unable to assuage their thirst. Many of the soldiers lay parched and panting along the battlements, no longer able to draw a bowstring or hurl a stone, while above five thousand Moors, stationed upon a rocky height which overlooked part of the town, kept up a galling fire into it with slings and crossbows; so that the Marquis of Cadiz was obliged to heighten the battlements by using the doors from the private dwellings.

The Christian cavaliers, exposed to this extreme peril, and in imminent danger of falling into the hands of the enemy, despatched fleet messengers to Seville and Cordova, entreating the chivalry of Andalusia to hasten to their aid. They sent likewise to implore assistance from the king and queen, who at that time held their court in Medina del Campo. In the midst of their distress, a tank, or cistern of water, was fortunately discovered in the city, which gave temporary relief to their sufferings.

CHAPTER VII.

THE perilous situation of the Christian cavaliers, pent up and beleaguered within the walls of Alhama, spread terror among their friends, and anxiety throughout all Andalusia. Nothing, however, could equal the anguish of the Marchioness of Cadiz, the wife of the gallant Roderigo Ponce de Leon. In her deep distress she looked round for some powerful noble, who had the means of rousing the country to the assistance of her husband. No one appeared more competent for the purpose than Don Juan de Guzman, the Duke of Medina Sidonia. He was one of the most wealthy and puissant grandees of Spain; his possessions extended over some of the most fertile parts of Andalusia, embracing towns and seaports, and numerous villages. Here he reigned in feudal state like a petty sovereign, and could at any time bring into the field an immense force of vassals and retainers. The Duke of Medina Sidonia, and the Marquis of Cadiz, however, were at this time deadly foes. An hereditary feud existed between them, that had often arisen to bloodshed and war; for as yet the fierce contests between the proud and puissant Spanish nobles had not been completely quelled by the power of the crown, and in this respect they exerted a right of sovereignty, in leading their vassals against each other in open field.

The Duke of Medina Sidonia would have appeared to many the very last person to whom to apply for aid of the Marquis of Cadiz; but the marchioness judged of him by the standard of her own high and generous mind. She knew him to be a gallant and courteous knight, and had already experienced the magnanimity of his spirit, having been relieved by him when besieged by the Moors in her husband's fortress of Arcos. To the duke, therefore, she applied in this moment of sudden calamity, imploring him to furnish succour to her husband. The event showed how well noble spirits understand each other. No sooner did the duke receive this appeal from the wife of his enemy, than he generously forgot all feeling of animosity, and determined to go in person to his succour. He immediately despatched a courteous letter to the marchioness, assuring her, that, in consideration of the request of so honourable and estimable a lady, and to rescue from peril so valiant a cavalier as her husband, whose loss would be great, not only to Spain, but to all Christendom, he would forego the

recollection of all past grievances, and hasten to his relief with all the forces he could raise.

The duke wrote at the same time to the alcaydes of his towns and fortresses, ordering them to join him forthwith at Seville, with all the force they could spare from their garrisons. He called on all the chivalry of Andalusia to make a common cause in the rescue of those Christian cavaliers, and he offered large pay to all volunteers who would resort to him with horses, armour, and provisions. Thus all who could be incited by honour, religion, patriotism, or thirst of gain, were induced to hasten to his standard; and he took the field with an army of five thousand horse and fifty thousand foot.* Many cavaliers of distinguished name accompanied him in this generous enterprize. Among these was the redoubtable Alonzo de Aguilar, the chosen friend of the Marquis of Cadiz, and with him his younger brother, Gonsalvo Fernandez de Cordova, afterwards renowned as the grand captain; Don Rodrigo Giron, also master of the order of Calatrava; together with Martin Alonzo de Montemayor, and the Marquis de Villena, esteemed the best lance in Spain. It was a gallant and splendid army, comprising the power of Spanish chivalry, and poured forth in brilliant array from the gates of Seville, bearing the great standard of that ancient and renowned city.

Ferdinand and Isabella were at Medina del Campo when tidings came of the capture of Alhama. The king was at mass when he received the news, and ordered *Te Deum* to be chanted for this signal triumph of the holy faith. When the first flush of triumph had subsided, and the king learned the imminent peril of the valorous Ponce de Leon and his companions, and the great danger there was that this strong-hold might again be wrested from their grasp, he resolved to hurry in person to the scene of action. So pressing appeared to him the emergency, that he barely gave himself time to take a hasty repast while horses were providing, and then departed at furious speed for Andalusia, leaving a request for the queen to follow him.† He was attended by Don Beltran de la Cueva, Duke of Albuquerque; Don Inigo Lopez de Mendoza, Count of Tendilla; and Don Pedro Manriquez, Count of Trevino, with a few more cavaliers of prowess and distinction.

* Cronica de los Duques de Medina Sidonia por Pedro de Medina. MS.

† Illescas, Hist. Pontifical.

He travelled by forced journeys, frequently changing his jaded horses, being eager to arrive in time to take command of the Andalusian chivalry. When he came within five leagues of Cordova, the Duke of Albuquerque remonstrated with him upon entering with such incautious haste into the enemies' country. He represented to him, that there were troops enough assembled to succour Alhama, and that it was not for him to adventure his royal person in doing what could be done by his subjects, especially as he had such valiant and experienced captains to act for him. "Besides, sire," added the duke, "your majesty should bethink you, that the troops about to take the field are mere men of Andalusia; whereas your illustrious predecessors never made an inroad into the territory of the Moors, without being accompanied by a powerful force of the stanch and iron warriors of Old Castile."

"Duke," replied the king, "your council might have been good had I not departed from Medina with the avowed determination of succouring these cavaliers in prison. I am now near the end of my journey, and it would be beneath my dignity to change my intention, before even I had met with an impediment. I shall take the troops of this country who are assembled, without waiting for those of Castile, and, with the aid of God, shall prosecute my journey*."

As King Ferdinand approached Cordova, the principal inhabitants came forth to receive him. Learning, however, that the Duke of Medina Sidonia was already on the march, and pressing forward into the territory of the Moors, the king was all on fire to overtake him, and to lead in person the succour to Alhama. Without entering Cordova, therefore, he exchanged his weary horses for those of the inhabitants who had come forth to meet him, and pressed forward for the army. He despatched fleet couriers in advance, requesting the Duke of Medina Sidonia to await his coming, that he might take command of the forces.

Neither the duke nor his companions in arms, however, felt inclined to pause in their generous expedition, and gratify the inclination of the king. They sent back missives, representing that they were far within the enemies' frontiers, and it was dangerous either to pause or to turn back. They had likewise received pressing entreaties from the besieged to

* Pulgar, Cronica, p. iii. c. 3.

hasten their speed, setting forth their great sufferings, and their hourly peril of being overwhelmed by the enemy.

The king was at Ponton del Maestre when he received these missives. So inflamed was he with zeal for the success of this enterprise, that he would have penetrated into the kidgdom of Granada with the handful of cavaliers who accompanied him; but they represented the rashness of such a journey, through the mountainous defiles of a hostile country thickly beset with towns and castles. With some difficulty, therefore, he was dissuaded from his inclination, and prevailed upon to await tidings from the army, in the frontier city of Antequera.

CHAPTER VIII.

While all Andalusia was thus in arms, and pouring its chivalry through the mountain passes of the Moorish frontier, the garrison of Alhama was reduced to great extremity, and in danger of sinking under its sufferings before the promised succour could arrive. The intolerable thirst that prevailed in consequence of the scarcity of water, the incessant watch that had to be maintained over the vast force of enemies without, and the great number of prisoners within, and the wounds which almost every soldier had received in the incessant skirmishes and assaults, had worn grievously both flesh and spirit. The noble Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz, still animated the soldiery, however, by word and example, sharing every hardship, and being foremost in every danger; exemplifying, that a good commander is the vital spirit of an army.

When Muley Aben Hassan heard of the vast force that was approaching under the command of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, and that Ferdinand was coming in person with additional troops, he perceived that no time was to be lost: Alhama must be carried by one powerful attack, or abandoned entirely to the Christians.

A number of Moorish cavaliers, some of the bravest youth of Granada, knowing the wishes of the king, proposed to undertake a desperate enterprise, which, if successful, must put Alhama in his power. Early one morning, when it was scarcely the gray of the dawn, about the time of changing the watch, these cavaliers approached the town, at a place considered inaccessible, from the steepness of the rocks on

which the wall was founded; which it was supposed elevated the battlements beyond the reach of the longest scaling ladders. The Moorish knights, aided by a number of the strongest and most active escaladors, mounted these rocks, and applied the ladders without being discovered; for, to divert attention from them, Muley Aben Hassan made a false attack upon the town in another quarter.

The scaling party mounted with difficulty, and in small numbers; the sentinel was killed at his post, and seventy of the Moors made their way into the streets before an alarm was given. The guards rushed to the walls, to stop the hostile throng that was still pouring in. A sharp conflict, hand to hand, and man to man, took place on the battlements, and many on both sides fell. The Moors, whether wounded or slain, were thrown headlong without the walls, the scaling ladders were overturned, and those who were mounting were dashed upon the rocks, and from thence tumbled upon the plain. Thus in a little while the ramparts were cleared by Christian prowess, led on by that valiant knight Don Alonzo Ponce, the uncle, and that brave esquire Pedro Pinedo, nephew of the Marquis of Cadiz.

The walls being cleared, these two kindred cavaliers now hastened with their forces in pursuit of the seventy Moors who had gained an entrance into the town. The main part of the garrison being engaged at a distance, resisting the feigned attack of the Moorish king, this fierce band of infidels had ranged the streets almost without opposition, and were making their way to the gates, to throw them open to the army.* They were chosen men from among the Moorish forces, several of them gallant knights of the proudest families of Granada. Their footsteps through the city were in a manner printed in blood, and they were tracked by the bodies of those they had killed and wounded. They had attained the gate, most of the guard had fallen beneath their cimeters, a moment more and Alhama would have been thrown open to the enemy.

Just at this juncture, Don Alonzo Ponce and Pedro de Pineda reached the spot with their forces. The Moors had the enemy in front and rear; they placed themselves back to back, with their banner in the centre. In this way they fought with desperate and deadly determination, making a

* Zurita, lib. xx. cap. 43.

rampart around them with the slain. More Christian troops arrived, and hemmed them in; but still they fought, without asking for quarter. As their numbers decreased, they serried their circle still closer, defending their banner from assault, and the last Moor died at his post grasping the standard of the Prophet. This standard was displayed from the walls, and the turbaned heads of the Moors were thrown down to the besiegers.*

Muley Aben Hassan tore his beard with rage at the failure of this attempt, and at the death of so many of his chosen cavaliers. He saw that all further effort was in vain. His scouts brought word that they had seen, from the heights, the long columns and flaunting banners of the Christian army approaching through the mountains. To linger would be to place himself between two bodies of the enemy. Breaking up his camp, therefore, in all haste, he gave up the siege of Alhama, and hastened back to Granada: and the last clash of his cymbals scarce died upon the ear from the distant hills before the standard of the Duke of Medina Sidonia was seen emerging in another direction from the defiles of the mountains.

When the Christians in Alhama beheld their enemies retreating on one side, and their friends advancing on the other, they uttered shouts of joy and hymns of thanksgiving; for it was as a sudden relief from present death. Harassed by several weeks of incessant vigil and fighting, suffering from scarcity of provisions and almost continual thirst, they resembled skeletons rather than living men. It was a noble and gracious sight to behold the meeting of those two ancient foes, the Duke of Medina Sidonia and the Marquis of Cadiz. When the marquis beheld his magnanimous deliverer approaching, he melted into tears: all past animosities only gave the greater poignancy to present feelings of gratitude and admiration; they clasped each other in their arms, and, from that time forward, were true and cordial friends.

While this generous scene took place between the commanders, a sordid contest arose among their troops. The soldiers who had come to the rescue claimed a portion of the spoils of Alhama; and so violent was the dispute, that both

* Pedro Pineda received the honour of knighthood from the hand of King Ferdinand for his valour on this occasion. (Alonzo Ponce was already a knight.) See Zuñiga, Annals of Seville, lib. xii. an. 1482.

parties seized their arms. The Duke of Medina Sidonia interfered, and settled the question with his characteristic magnanimity. He declared that the spoil belonged to those who had captured the city. "We have taken the field," said he, "only for honour, for religion, and for the rescue of our countrymen and fellow-Christians; and the success of our enterprise is a sufficient and glorious reward. If we desire booty, there are sufficient Moorish cities yet to be taken to enrich us all." The soldiers were convinced by the frank and chivalrous reasoning of the duke; they replied to his speech by acclamations, and the transient broil was happily appeased.

The Marchioness of Cadiz, with the forethought of a loving wife, had despatched her major domo with the army with a large supply of provisions. Tables were immediately spread beneath the tents, where the Marquis gave a banquet to the Duke and the cavaliers who had accompanied him, and nothing but hilarity prevailed in this late scene of suffering and death.

A garrison of fresh troops was left in Alhama, and the veterans who had so valiantly captured and maintained it returned to their homes burdened with precious booty. The Marquis and Duke, with their confederate cavaliers, repaired to Antiquera, where they were received with great distinction by the King, who honoured the Marquis of Cadiz with signal marks of favour. The Duke then accompanied his late enemy, but now most zealous and grateful friend, the Marquis of Cadiz, to his town of Marchena, where he received the reward of his generous conduct in the thanks and blessings of the Marchioness. The Marquis gave a sumptuous entertainment in honour of his guest: for a day and a night his palace was thrown open, and was the scene of continual revel and festivity. When the Duke departed for his estates at St. Lucar, the Marquis attended him for some distance on his journey, and when they separated, it was as the parting scene of brothers. Such was the noble spectacle exhibited to the chivalry of Spain by these two illustrious rivals. Each reaped universal renown from the part he had performed in the campaign: the Marquis, from having surprised and captured one of the most important and formidable fortresses of the kingdom of Granada, and the Duke from having subdued his deadliest foe by a great act of magnanimity.

CHAPTER IX.

THE Moorish King, Aben Hassan, returned, baffled and disappointed, from before the walls of Alhama, and was received with groans and smothered execrations by the people of Granada. The prediction of the santon was in every mouth, and appeared to be rapidly fulfilling; for the enemy was already strongly fortified in Alhama, in the very heart of the kingdom. The disaffection, which broke out in murmurs among the common people, fermented more secretly and dangerously among the nobles. Muley Aben Hassan was of a fierce and cruel nature; his reign had been marked with tyranny and bloodshed, and many chiefs of the family of the Abencerrages, the noblest lineage among the Moors, had fallen victims to his policy or vengeance. A deep plot was now formed to put an end to his oppressions, and dispossess him of the throne. The situation of the royal household favoured the conspiracy.

Muley Aben Hassan, though cruel, was uxorious; that is to say, he had many wives, and was prone to be managed by them by turns. He had two queens, in particular, whom he had chosen from affection. One, named Ayxa, was a Moorish female; she was likewise termed in Arabic La Horra, or "the chaste," from the spotless purity of her character. While yet in the prime of her beauty, she bore a son to Aben Hassan, the expected heir to his throne. The name of this prince was Mahomet Abdalla, or, as he has more generally been termed among historians, Boabdil. At his birth, the astrologers, according to custom, cast his horoscope: they were seized with fear and trembling when they beheld the fatal portents revealed to their science. "Alla achbar! God is great!" exclaimed they: "he alone controls the fate of empires: it is written in the heavens, that this prince shall sit upon the throne of Granada, but that the downfall of the kingdom shall be accomplished during his reign." From this time the prince was ever regarded with aversion by his father; and the series of persecutions which he suffered, and the dark prediction which hung over him from his infancy, procured him the surname of El Zogoybi, or, "the unfortunate." He is more commonly known by the appellation of El Chico, "the younger," to distinguish him from an usurping uncle.

The other favourite queen of Aben Hassan was named

Fatima, to which the Moors added the appellation of La Zoroya, or "the light of the dawn," from her effulgent beauty. She was a Christian by birth, the daughter of the commander Sancho Ximenes de Solis, and had been taken captive in her tender youth.*

The king, who was well stricken in years at the time, became enamoured of the blooming Christian maid. He made her his sultana; and, like most old men, who marry in their dotage, resigned himself to her management. Zoroya became the mother of two princes; and her anxiety for their advancement seemed to extinguish every other natural feeling in her breast. She was as ambitious as she was beautiful, and her ruling desire became, to see one of her sons seated upon the throne of Granada.

For this purpose she made use of all her arts, and of the complete ascendancy she had over the mind of her cruel husband, to undermine his other children in his affections, and to fill him with jealousies of their designs. Muley Aben Hassan was so wrought upon by her machinations, that he publicly put several of his sons to death at the celebrated Fountain of Lions, in the court of the Alhambra; a place signalized in Moorish history as the scene of many sanguinary deeds.

The next measure of Zoroya was against her rival sultana, the virtuous Ayxa. She was past the bloom of her beauty, and had ceased to be attractive in the eyes of her husband. He was easily persuaded to repudiate her, and to confine her and her son in the tower of Comares, one of the principal towers of the Alhambra. As Boabdil increased in years, Zoroya beheld in him a formidable obstacle to the pretensions of her sons; for he was universally considered heir apparent to the throne. The jealousies, suspicions, and alarms of his tiger-hearted father were again excited; he was reminded, too, of the prediction, that fixed the ruin of the kingdom during the reign of this prince. Muley Aben Hassan impiously set the stars at defiance. "The sword of the executioner," said he, "shall prove the falsehood of these lying horoscopes, and shall silence the ambition of Boabdil, as it has the presumption of his brothers."

The sultan Ayxa was secretly apprized of the cruel design of the old monarch. She was a woman of talents and courage, and, by means of her female attendants, concerted a plan for

* Cronica del Gran Cardenal, c. lxxi.

the escape of her son. A faithful servant was instructed to wait below the Alhambra, in the dead of the night, on the banks of the river Darro, with a fleet Arabian courser. The sultana, when the castle was in a state of deep repose, tied together the shawls and scarfs of herself and her female attendants, and lowered the youthful prince from the tower of Comares.* He made his way in safety down the steep rocky hill to the banks of the Darro, and, throwing himself on the Arabian courser, was thus spirited-off to the city of Guadix in the Alpuxarres. Here he lay for some time concealed, until, gaining adherents, he fortified himself in the place, and set the machinations of his tyrant father at defiance. Such was the state of affairs in the royal household of Granada, when Muley Aben Hassan returned foiled from his expedition against Alhama. The faction, which had been secretly formed among the nobles, determined to depose the old king Aben Hassan, and to elevate his son Boabdil to the throne. They concerted their measures with the latter, and an opportunity soon presented to put them in practice. Muley Aben Hassan had a royal country palace, called Alexares, in the vicinity of Granada, to which he resorted occasionally, to recreate his mind during this time of perplexity. He had been passing one day among its bowers, when, on returning to the capital, he found the gates closed against him, and his son Mohammed Abdalla, otherwise called Boabdil, proclaimed king. "Alla achbar! God is great!" exclaimed old Muley Aben Hassan; it is in vain to contend against what is written in the book of fate. It was predestined, that my son should sit upon the throne. Alla forefend the rest of the prediction!" The old monarch knew the inflammable nature of the Moors, and that it was useless to attempt to check any sudden blaze of popular passion. "A little while," said he, "and this rash flame will burn itself out; and the people, when cool, will listen to reason." So he turned his steed from the gate, and repaired to the city of Baza, where he was received with great demonstrations of loyalty. He was not a man to give up his throne without a struggle. A large part of the kingdom still remained faithful to him; he trusted, that the conspiracy in the capital was but transient and partial, and that by suddenly making his appearance in its streets, at the head of a moderate force, he should awe the people again into allegiance. He

* Salazar, Cronica del Gran Cardenal, c. lxxi.

took his measures with that combination of dexterity and daring, which formed his character, and arrived one night under the wall of Granada with five hundred chosen followers. Scaling the walls of the Alhambra, he threw himself, with sanguinary fury, into its silent courts. The sleeping inmates were roused from their repose only to fall by the exterminating cimeter. The rage of Aben Hassan spared neither age, nor rank, nor sex; the halls resounded with shrieks and yells, and the fountains ran red with blood. The alcayde, Aben Comixer, retreated to a strong tower, with a few of the garrison and inhabitants. The furious Aben Hassan did not lose time in pursuing him: he was anxious to secure the city, and to wreak his vengeance on its rebellious inhabitants. Descending with his bloody band into the streets, he cut down the defenceless inhabitants, as, startled from their sleep, they rushed forth, to learn the cause of the alarm. The city was soon completely roused; the people flew to arms; lights blazed in every street, revealing the scanty numbers of this band, that had been dealing such fatal vengeance in the dark. Muley Aben Hassan had been mistaken in his conjectures. The great mass of the people, incensed by his tyranny, were zealous in favour of his son. A violent but transient conflict took place in the streets and squares; many of the followers of Aben Hassan were slain, the rest driven out of the city, and the old monarch, with the remnant of his band, retreated to his loyal city of Malaga.

Such was the commencement of those great internal feuds and divisions, which hastened the downfall of Granada. The Moors became separated into two hostile factions, headed by the father and the son, and several bloody encounters took place between them; yet they never failed to act with all their separate force against the Christians, as a common enemy, whenever an opportunity occurred.

CHAPTER X.

KING FERDINAND held a council of war at Cordova, where it was deliberated what was to be done with Alhama. Most of the council advised that it should be demolished, inasmuch as, being in the centre of the Moorish kingdom, it would be at all times liable to attack, and could only be maintained by a powerful garrison, and at a vast expense.

Queen Isabella arrived at Cordova in the midst of these deliberations, and listened to them with surprise and impatience. "What!" said she, "shall we destroy the first fruits of our victories? shall we abandon the first place we have wrested from the Moors? Never let us suffer such an idea to occupy our minds. It would give new courage to the enemy; arguing fear or feebleness in our councils. You talk of the toil and expense of maintaining Alhama. Did we doubt, on undertaking this war, that it was to be a war of infinite cost, labour, and bloodshed? and shall we shrink from the cost the moment a victory is obtained, and the question is merely to guard or abandon its glorious trophy? Let us hear no more about the destruction of Alhama; les us maintain its walls sacred, as a strong-hold, granted us by Heaven, in the centre of this hostile land; and let our only consideration be, how to extend our conquest, and capture the surrounding cities." The language of the queen infused a more lofty and chivalrous spirit into the royal council. Preparations were immediately made to maintain Alhama at all risk and expense; and King Ferdinand appointed as alcayde, Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero, senior of the house of Palma, supported by Diego Lopez de Ayola, Pero Ruiz de Alarcon, and Alonzo Ortis, captains of four hundred lances and a body of one thousand foot, supplied with provisions for three months. Ferdinand resolved also to lay siege to Loxa, a city of great strength, at no great distance from Alhama. For this purpose he called upon all the cities and towns of Andalusia and Estremadura, and the domains of the orders of Santiago, Calatrava, and Alcantara, and of the priory of St. Juan, and the kingdom of Toledo, and beyond, to the cities of Salamanca, Toro, and Valladolid, to furnish, according to their repartimientos or allotments, a certain quantity of bread, wine, and cattle, to be delivered at the royal camp before Loxa, one half at the end of June, and one half in July. These lands, also, together with Biscay and Guipuscoa, were ordered to send reinforcements of horse and foot, each town furnishing its quota; and great diligence was used in providing lombards, powder, and other walike munitions.

The Moors were no less active in their preparations; and sent missives into Africa, entreating supplies, and calling upon the Barbary princes to aid them in this war of the faith. To intercept all succour, the Castilian sovereigns stationed an

armada of ships and galleys in the Straits of Gibraltar, under the command of Martin Diaz de Mena and Carlos de Valera, with orders to scour the Barbary coast, and sweep every Moorish sail from the sea.

While these preparations were making, Ferdinand made an incursion, at the head of his army, into the kingdom of Granada, and laid waste the vega; destroying its hamlets and villages, ravaging its fields of grain, and driving away the cattle.

It was about the end of June, that King Ferdinand departed from Cordova, to sit down before the walls of Loxa. So confident was he of success, that he left a great part of the army at Ecija, and advanced with but five thousand cavalry and eight thousand infantry. The Marquis of Cadiz, a warrior as wise as he was valiant, remonstrated against employing so small a force; and, indeed, was opposed to the measure altogether, as being undertaken precipitately, and without sufficient preparation. King Ferdinand, however, was influenced by the counsel of Don Diego de Merlo, and was eager to strike a brilliant and decided blow. A vain-glorious confidence prevailed about this time among the Spanish cavaliers: they overrated their own prowess; or rather, they undervalued and despised their enemy. Many of them believed, that the Moors would scarcely remain in their city, when they saw the Christian troops advancing to assail it. The Spanish chivalry marched, therefore, gallantly and fearlessly, and almost carelessly, over the border, scantily supplied with the things needful for a besieging army in the heart of an enemy's country. In the same negligent and confident spirit they took up their station before Loxa. The country around was broken and hilly, so that it was extremely difficult to form a combined camp. The river Xenil, which runs by the town, was compressed between high banks, and so deep as to be fordable with extreme difficulty, and the Moors had possession of the bridge. The king pitched his tents in a plantation of olives, on the banks of the river; the troops were distributed in different encampments on the heights, but separated from each other by deep rocky ravines, so as to be incapable of yielding each other prompt assistance, and there was no room for the operation of the cavalry. The artillery, also, was so injudiciously placed as to be almost entirely useless. Alonzo of Arragon, Duke of Villahermosa, and illegitimate

brother of the king, was present at the siege, and disapproved of the whole arrangement. He was one of the most able generals of his time, and especially renowned for his skill in battering fortified places. He recommended, that the whole disposition of the camp should be changed, and that several bridges should be thrown across the river. His advice was adopted, but slowly and negligently followed; so that it was rendered of no avail. Among other oversights, in this hasty and negligent expedition, the army had no supply of baked bread, and, in the hurry of encampment, there was no time to erect furnaces. Cakes were therefore hastily made, and baked on the coals; and for two days the troops were supplied in this irregular way.

King Ferdinand felt too late the insecurity of his position, and endeavoured to provide a temporary remedy. There was a height near the city, called by the Moors Santo Albohacen, which was in front of the bridge. He ordered several of his most valiant cavaliers to take possession of this height, and to hold it, as a check upon the enemy and a protection to the camp. The cavaliers chosen for this distinguished and perilous post were the Marquis of Cadiz, the Marquis of Villena, Don Roderigo Tellez Giron, master of Calatrava, his brother the Count of Urena, and Don Alonzo de Aguilar. These valiant warriors, and tried companions in arms, led their troops with alacrity to the height, which soon glittered with the array of arms, and was graced by several of the most redoubtable pennons of warlike Spain.

Loxa was commanded at this time by an old Moorish alcayde, whose daughter was the favourite wife of Boabdil el Chico. The name of this Moor was Ibrahim Ali Atar; but he was generally known among the Spaniards as Alatar. He had grown gray in border warfare, was an implacable enemy of the Christians, and his name had long been the terror of the frontier. He was in the ninetieth year of his age, yet indomitable in spirit, fiery in his passions, sinewy, and powerful in frame, deeply versed in warlike stratagem, and accounted the best lance in all Mauritania. He had three thousand horsemen under his command, veteran troops, with whom he had often scoured the borders, and he daily expected the old Moorish king with reinforcements.

Old Ali Atar had watched, from his fortress, every movement of the Christian army, and had exulted in all the errors

of its commanders. When he beheld the flower of Spanish chivalry glittering about the height of Albohacen, his eye flushed with exultation. "By the aid of Allah," said he, "I will give these prankling cavaliers a rouse."

Ali Atar privately, and by night, sent forth a large body of his chosen troops, to lie in ambush near one of the skirts of Albohacen. On the fourth day of the siege, he sallied across the bridge, and made a feigned attack upon the height. The cavaliers rushed impetuously forth to meet him, leaving their encampments almost unprotected. Ali Atar wheeled and fled, and was hastily pursued. When the Christian cavaliers had been drawn a considerable distance from their encampments, they heard a vast shout behind them, and, looking round, beheld their encampment assailed by the Moorish force, which had been placed in ambush, and had ascended a different side of the hill.

The cavaliers desisted from the pursuit, and hastened to prevent the plunder of their tents. Ali Atar in his turn wheeled and pursued them: and they were attacked in front and rear on the summit of the hill. The contest lasted for an hour; the height of Albohacen was red with blood; many brave cavaliers fell, expiring among heaps of the enemy. The fierce Ali Atar fought with the fury of a demon, until the arrival of more Christian forces compelled him to retreat into the city. The severest loss to the Christians in this skirmish was that of Roderigo Tellez Giron, master of Calatrava: as he was raising his arm to make a blow, an arrow pierced him, just beneath the shoulder, at the open part of the corslet. He fell instantly from his horse, but was caught by Pedro Gasca, a cavalier of Avila, who conveyed him to his tent, where he died. The king and queen, and the whole kingdom mourned his death; for he was in the freshness of his youth, being but twenty-four years of age, and had proved himself a gallant and high-minded cavalier. A melancholy group collected about his corse, on the bloody height of Albohacen: the knights of Calatrava mourned him as a commander; the cavaliers, who were encamped on the height, lamented him as their companion in arms, in a service of perils, while the Count of Ureña grieved over him with the tender affection of a brother.

King Ferdinand now perceived the wisdom of the opinion of the Marquis of Cadiz, and that his force was quite in-

sufficient for the enterprise. To continue his camp in its present unfortunate position would cost him the lives of his bravest cavaliers, if not a total defeat, in case of reinforcements to the enemy. He called a council of war late in the evening of Saturday; and it was determined to withdraw the army, early the next morning, to Rio Frio, a short distance from the city, and there wait for additional troops from Cordova. The next morning early, the cavaliers on the height of Albohacen began to strike their tents. No sooner did Ali Atar behold this, than he sallied forth to attack them. Many of the Christian troops, who had not heard of the intention to change the camp, seeing the tents struck, and the Moors sallying forth, supposed that the enemy had been reinforced in the night, and that the army was on the point of retreating. Without stopping to ascertain the truth, or to receive orders, they fled in dismay, spreading confusion through the camp; nor did they halt until they had reached the Rock of the Lovers, about seven leagues from Loxa.*

The king and his commanders saw the imminent peril of the moment, and made face to the Moors, each commander guarding his quarter, and repelling all assaults, while the tents were struck, and the artillery and ammunition conveyed away. The king, with a handful of cavaliers, galloped to a rising ground, exposed to the fire of the enemy, calling upon the flying troops, and endeavouring in vain to rally them. Setting upon the Moors, he and his cavaliers charged them so vigorously, that they put a squadron to flight, slaying many with their swords and lances, and driving others into the river, where they were drowned. The Moors, however, were soon reinforced, and returned in great numbers. The king was in danger of being surrounded: the Moors assailed him furiously; and twice he owed his safety to the valour of Don Juan de Ribera, senior of Montemayor.

The Marquis of Cadiz beheld from a distance the peril of his sovereign. Summoning about seventy horsemen to follow him, he galloped to the spot, threw himself between the king and the enemy, and, hurling his lance, transpierced one of the most daring of the Moors. For some time he remained with no other weapon than his sword; his horse was wounded by an arrow, and many of his followers were slain; but he succeeded in beating off the Moors, and rescuing the king

* Pulgar, Crónica.

from imminent jeopardy, whom he then prevailed upon to retire to less dangerous ground.*

The marquis continued throughout the day to expose himself to the repeated assaults of the enemy. He was ever found in the place of greatest danger, and through his bravery a great part of the army and the camp was preserved from destruction.* It was a perilous day for the commanders; for, in a retreat of the kind, it is the noblest cavaliers who most expose themselves, to save their people. The Duke of Medina Celi was struck to the ground, but rescued by his troops. The Count of Tendilla, whose tents were nearest to the city, received several wounds; and various other cavaliers of the most distinguished note were exposed to fearful hazard. The whole day was passed in bloody skirmishings, in which the hidalgos and cavaliers of the royal household distinguished themselves by their bravery. At length, the encampments being all broken up, and most of the artillery and baggage removed, the bloody height of Albohacen was abandoned, and the neighbourhood of Loxa evacuated. Several tents, a quantity of provisions, and a few pieces of artillery, were left upon the spot, from the want of horses or mules to carry them off.

Ali Atar hung upon the rear of the retiring army, and harassed it until it reached Rio Frio. From thence Ferdinand returned to Cordova, deeply mortified, though greatly benefited, by the severe lesson he had received, which served to render him more cautious in his campaigns, and more diffident of fortune. He sent letters to all parts excusing his retreat, imputing it to the small number of his forces, and the circumstance, that many of them were quotas sent from various cities, and not in royal pay. In the mean time, to console his troops for their disappointment, and to keep up their spirits, he led them upon another inroad, to lay waste the vega of Granada.

CHAPTER XI.

OLD Muley Aben Hassan had mustered an army, and marched to the relief of Loxa; but arrived too late. The last squadron of Ferdinand had already passed over the border. "They have come and gone," said he, "like a summer cloud, and all their vaunting has been mere empty

* Cura de los Palacios, c. 58.

thunder." He turned, to make another attempt upon Alhama, the garrison of which was in the utmost consternation at the retreat of Ferdinand, and would have deserted the place, had it not been for the courage and perseverance of the alcayde, Luis Fernández Puerto Carrero. That brave and loyal commander cheered up the spirits of the men, and kept the old Moorish king at bay, until the approach of Ferdinand, on his second incursion into the vega, obliged him to make an unwilling retreat to Malaga.

Muley Aben Hassan felt, that it would be in vain, with his inferior force, to oppose the powerful army of the Christian monarch; but to remain idle, and see his territories laid waste, would ruin him in the estimation of his people. "If we cannot parry," said he, "we can strike: if we cannot keep our own lands from being ravaged, we can ravage the lands of the enemy." He inquired, and learned that most of the chivalry of Andalusia, in their eagerness for a foray, had marched off with the king, and left their own country almost defenceless. The territories of the Duke of Medina Sidonia were particularly unguarded. Here were vast plains of pasturage, covered with flocks and herds; the very country for a hasty inroad. The old monarch had a bitter grudge against the duke, for having foiled him at Alhama. "I'll give this cavalier a lesson," said he, exultingly, "that will cure him of his love of campaigning." So he prepared in all haste for a forage into the country about Medina Sidonia.

Muley Aben Hassan sallied out of Malaga with fifteen hundred horse and six thousand foot, and took the way by the sea-coast, marching through Esteponia and entering the Christian country between Gibraltar and Castellar. The only person that was likely to molest him on this route was one Pedro de Vargas, a shrewd, hardy, and vigilant soldier, alcayde of Gibraltar, and who lay ensconced in his old warrior-rock as in a citadel. Muley Aben Hassan knew the watchful and daring character of the man; but had ascertained, that his garrison was too small to enable him to make a sally, or at least to assure him any success. Still he pursued his march with great silence and caution; sent parties in advance, to explore every pass where a foe might lie in ambush, cast many an anxious eye towards the old rock of Gibraltar, as its cloud-capt summit was seen towering in the distance on his left; nor did he feel entirely at ease, until he

had passed through the broken and mountainous country of Castellar, and descended into the plains. Here he encamped, on the banks of the Celemin. From hence he sent four hundred corredors, or fleet horsemen, armed with lances, who were to station themselves near Algeziras, and to keep a strict watch, across the bay, upon the opposite fortress of Gibraltar. If the alcayde attempted to sally forth, they were to waylay and attack him, being almost four times his supposed force, and were to send swift tidings to the camp.

In the meantime, two hundred corredors were despatched to scour that vast plain called the Campiña de Tarifa, abounding with flocks and herds, and two hundred more were to ravage the lands about Medina Sidonia. Muley Aben Hassan remained with the main body of the army as a rallying point on the banks of the Celemin. The foraging parties scoured the country to such effect, that they came driving vast flocks and herds before them, enough to supply the place of all that had been swept from the vega of Granada. The troops which had kept watch upon the rock of Gibraltar returned, with word, that they had not seen a Christian helmet stirring. The old king congratulated himself upon the secrecy and promptness with which he had conducted his foray, and upon having baffled the vigilance of Pedro de Vargas.

Muley Aben Hassan had not been so secret as he imagined. The watchful Pedro de Vargas had received notice of his movements. His garrison was barely sufficient for the defence of the place, and he feared to take the field, and leave his fortress unguarded. Luckily, at this juncture, there arrived in the harbour of Gibraltar a squadron of the armed galleys stationed in the strait, and commanded by Carlos de Valera. The alcayde immediately prevailed upon him to guard the place during his absence, and sallied forth at midnight with seventy horse. He made for the town of Castellar, which is strongly posted on a steep height, knowing that the Moorish king would have to return by this place. He ordered alarm fires to be lighted upon the mountains, to give notice that the Moors were on the ravage, that the peasants might drive the flocks and herds to places of refuge; and he sent couriers, riding at full speed in every direction, summoning the fighting men of the neighbourhood to meet him at Castellar. Muley Aben Hassan saw, by the fires blazing about the mountains, that the country was rising.

He struck his tents, and pushed forward as rapidly as possible for the border; but he was encumbered with booty, and with the vast cavalgada swept from the pastures of the Campiña of Tarifa. His scouts brought him word, that there were troops in the field; but he made light of the intelligence, knowing that they could only be those of the alcayde of Gibraltar, and that he had not more than a hundred horsemen in his garrison. He threw in advance two hundred and fifty of his bravest troops, and with them the alcaydes of Marabilla and Casares. Behind this vanguard was a great cavalgada of cattle, and in the rear marched the king, with the main force of his little army. It was near the middle of a sultry summer day, that they approached Castellar. De Vargas was on the watch; and beheld, by an immense cloud of dust, that they were descending one of the heights of that wild and broken country. The van-guard and rear-guard were above half a league asunder, with the cavalgada between them, and a long and close forest hid them from each other. De Vargas saw, that they could render but little assistance to each other, in case of a sudden attack, and might be easily thrown into confusion. He chose fifty of his bravest horsemen, and, making a circuit, took his post secretly in a narrow glen, opening into a defile between two rocky heights, through which the Moors had to pass. It was his intention to suffer the vanguard and the cavalgada to pass, and to fall upon the rear.

While thus lying perdue, six Moorish scouts, well mounted and well armed, entered the glen, examining every place that might conceal an enemy. Some of the Christians advised, that they should slay these six men, and retreat to Gibraltar. "No," said De Vargas; "I have come out for higher game than these, and I hope, by the aid of God and Santiago, to do good work this day. I know these Moors well, and doubt not but that they may readily be thrown into confusion."

By this time the six scouts approached so near, that they were on the point of discovering the Christian ambush. De Vargas gave the word, and ten horsemen rushed forth upon them. In an instant, four of the Moors rolled in the dust; the other two put spurs to their steeds, and fled towards their army, pursued by the ten Christians. About eighty of the Moorish vanguard came galloping to the relief of their companions: the Christians turned, and fled towards their ambush. De Vargas kept his men concealed, until the fugitives

and their pursuers came clattering pell-mell into the glen: at a signal trumpet, his men sallied forth, with great heat, and in close array. The Moors almost rushed upon their weapons before they perceived them. Forty of the infidels were overthrown; the rest turned their backs. "Forward!" cried De Vargas: "let us give the van-guard a brush before it can be joined by the rear." So saying, he pursued the flying Moors down the hill, and came with such force and fury upon the advance guard, as to overthrow many of them at the first encounter. As he wheeled off with his men, the Moors discharged their lances, upon which he returned to the charge, and made great slaughter. The Moors fought valiantly for a short time, until the alcaydes of Marabilla and Casares were slain, when they gave way, and fled for the rear-guard. In their flight, they passed through the cavalgada of cattle, threw the whole in confusion, and raised such a cloud of dust, that the Christians could no longer distinguish objects. Fearing the king and the main body might be at hand, and finding that De Vargas was severely wounded, they contented themselves with despoiling the slain, and taking above twenty-eight horses, and then returned to Castellar.

When the routed Moors came flying back on the rear-guard, Muley Aben Hassan feared that the people of Xeres were in arms. Several of his followers advised him to abandon the cavalgada, and retreat by another road. "No," said the old king; "he is no true soldier who gives up his booty without fighting." Putting spurs to his horse, he galloped forward through the centre of the cavalgada, driving the cattle to the right and left. When he reached the field of battle, he found it strewed with the bodies of upwards of one hundred Moors, among which were those of the two alcaydes. Enraged at the sight, he summoned all his crossbowmen and cavalry, pushed on to the very gates of Castellar, and set fire to two houses close to the walls. Pedro de Vargas was unable from his wound to sally forth in person; but he ordered out his troops, and there was brisk skirmishing under the walls, until the king drew off, and returned to the scene of the recent encounter. Here he had the bodies of the principal warriors laid across mules, to be interred honourably at Malaga. The rest of the slain were buried in the field of battle. Gathering together the scattered cavalgada, he paraded it slowly, in an immense line, past the walls of Castellar, by way of taunting his foe.

With all his fierceness, old Muley Aben Hassan had a gleam of warlike courtesy, and admired the hardy and soldier-like character of Pedro de Vargas. He summoned two Christian captives, and demanded, what were the revenues of the alcayde of Gibraltar. They told him, that, among other things, he was entitled to one out of every drove of cattle that passed his boundaries. "Alla forbid!" cried the old monarch, "that so brave a cavalier should be defrauded of his right. He immediately chose twelve of the finest cattle from the twelve droves which formed the cavalgada. These he gave in charge to an alfaqui, to deliver them to Pedro de Vargas. "Tell him," said he, "that I crave his pardon for not having sent these cattle sooner; but I have this moment learned the nature of his rights, and I hasten to satisfy them with the punctuality due to so worthy a cavalier. Tell him at the same time, that I had no idea the alcayde of Gibraltar was so active and vigilant in collecting his tolls."

The brave alcayde relished the stern, soldier-like pleasantry of the old Moorish monarch, and replied in the same tone. "Tell his majesty," said he, "that I kiss his hands for the honour he has done me, and regret that my scanty force has not permitted me to give him a more signal reception on his coming into these parts. Had three hundred horsemen, whom I have been promised from Xeres, arrived in time, I might have served up an entertainment more befitting such a monarch. I trust, however, they will arrive in the course of the night, in which case his majesty may be sure of a royal regale at the dawning."

He then ordered, that a rich silken vest and scarlet mantle should be given to the alfaqui, and dismissed him with great courtesy.

Muley Aben Hassan shook his head when he received the reply of De Vargas. "Alla preserve us," said he, "from any visitation of these hard riders of Xeres! A handful of troops, acquainted with the wild passes of these mountains, may destroy an army encumbered as ours is with booty."

It was some relief to the King, however, to learn that the hardy alcayde of Gibraltar was too severely wounded to take the field in person. He immediately beat a retreat with all speed, hurrying with such precipitation, that the cavalgada was frequently broken and scattered among the rugged defiles of the mountains, and above five thousand of the cattle turned

back, and were regained by the Christians. Muley Aben Hassan proceeded triumphantly with the residue to Malaga, glorying in the spoils of the Duke of Medina Sidonia.

King Ferdinand was mortified at finding his incursion into the vega of Granada counterbalanced by this incursion into his own dominions, and saw that there were two sides to the game of war, as to all other games. The only one who reaped real glory in this series of inroads and skirmishings was Pedro de Vargas, the stout alcayde of Gibraltar.*

CHAPTER XII.

The foray of old Muley Aben Hassan had touched the pride of the Andalusian chivalry, and they determined on retaliation. For this purpose, a number of the most distinguished cavaliers assembled at Antequera in the month of March, 1483. The leaders of the enterprise were the gallant Marquis of Cadiz, Don Pedro Henriquez, adelantado of Andalusia, Don Juan de Silva, Count of Cifuentes, and bearer of the royal standard, who commanded in Seville, Don Alonzo de Cardenas, master of the religious and military order of Santiago, and Don Alonzo de Aguilar. Several other cavaliers of note hastened to take part in the enterprise, and in a little time, about twenty-seven hundred horse and several companies of foot were assembled within the old warlike city of Antequera, comprising the very flower of Andalusian chivalry. A council of war was held by the chiefs, to determine in what quarter they should strike a blow. The rival Moorish kings were waging civil war with each other in the vicinity of Granada, and the whole country lay open to inroad. Various plans were proposed by the different cavaliers. The Marquis of Cadiz was desirous of scaling the walls of Zahara, and regaining possession of that important fortress. The master of Santiago, however, suggested a wider range, and a still more important object. He had received information, from his adal'les, who were apostate Moors, that an incursion might be made with safety into a mountainous region near Malaga, called the Axarquia. Here were valleys of pasture-land, well stocked with flocks and herds: and there were numerous villages and hamlets, which would be an easy prey.

* Alonzo de Palencia, lib. xxviii. c. 3.

The city of Malaga was too weakly garrisoned, and had too few cavalry, to send forth any force in opposition. And he added that they might extend their ravages to its very gates, and peradventure carry that wealthy place by sudden assault. The adventurous spirits of the cavaliers were inflamed by this suggestion: in their sanguine confidence they already beheld Malaga in their power, and they were eager for the enterprise. The Marquis of Cadiz endeavoured to interpose a little cool caution: he likewise had apostate adalides, the most intelligent and experienced on the borders. Among these, he placed especial reliance on one, named Luis Amar, who knew all the mountains and valleys of the country. He had received from him a particular account of these mountains of the Axarquia.* Their savage and broken nature was a sufficient defence for the fierce people that inhabited them, who, manning their rocks and their tremendous passes, which were often nothing more than the deep, dry bed of torrents, might set whole armies at defiance. Even if vanquished, they afforded no spoil to the victor; their houses were little better than bare walls, and they would drive off their scanty flocks and herds to the fortresses of the mountains. The sober council of the Marquis was overruled. The cavaliers, accustomed to mountain warfare, considered themselves and their horses equal to any wild and rugged expedition, and were flushed with the idea of a brilliant assault upon Malaga. Leaving all heavy baggage at Antequera, and all such as had horses too weak for this mountain scramble, they set forth, full of spirits and confidence. Don Alonzo de Aguilar and the adelantado of Andalusia led the squadron of advance; the Count of Cifuentes followed, with certain of the chivalry of Seville; then came the battalion of the most valiant Roderigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz; he was accompanied by several of his brothers and nephews, and many cavaliers who sought distinction under his banner; and as this family band paraded in martial state through the streets of Antequera, they attracted universal attention and applause. The rear-guard was led by Don Alonzo Cardenas, master of Santiago, and was composed

* Pulgar, in his chronicle, reverses the case, and makes the Marquis of Cadiz recommend the expedition to the Axarquia; but Fray Antonio Agapida is supported in his statement by that most veracious and contemporary chronicler, Andres Bernaldo, curate of Los Palacios.

of the knights of his order, and the cavaliers of Ecija, with certain men at arms of the holy brotherhood, whom the king had placed under his command. The army was attended by a great train of mules, laden with provisions for a few days' supply, until they should be able to forage among the Moorish villages. Never did a more gallant and self-confident little army tread the earth. It was composed of men full of health and vigour, to whom war was a pastime and delight. They had spared no expense in their equipments; for never was the pomp of war carried to a higher pitch than among the proud chivalry of Spain. Cased in armour, richly inlaid and embossed, decked with rich surcoats and waving plumes, and superbly mounted on Andalusian steeds, they pranced out of Antequera, with banners flying, and their various devices and armorial bearings ostentatiously displayed; and, in the confidence of their hopes, promised the inhabitants to enrich them with the spoils of Malaga. In the rear of this warlike pageant followed a peaceful band, intent upon profiting by the anticipated victories. They were not the customary wretches that hover about armies, to plunder and strip the dead; but goodly and substantial traders, from Seville, Cordova, and other cities of traffic. They rode sleek mules, and were clad in fair raiment, with long leathern purses at their girdles, well filled with pistoles and other golden coin. They had heard of the spoils wasted by the soldiery at the capture of Alhama, and were provided with monies to buy up the jewels and precious stones, the vessels of gold and silver, and the rich silks and cloths, that should from the plunder of Malaga. The proud cavaliers eyed these sons of traffic with great disdain, but permitted them to follow, for the convenience of the troops, who might otherwise be overburdened with booty.

It had been intended to conduct this expedition with great celerity and secrecy; but the noise of their preparations had already reached the city of Malaga. The garrison, it is true, was weak, but the commander was himself a host. This was Muley Abdallah, commonly called El Zagal, or, "the valiant." He was younger brother of Muley Aben Hassan, and general of the few forces which remained faithful to the old monarch. He possessed equal fierceness of spirit with his brother, and surpassed him in craft and vigilance. His very name was a war cry among his soldiery, who had the most extravagant opinion of his prowess.

El Zagal suspected that Malaga was the object of this noisy expedition. He consulted with old Bexir, a veteran Moor, who governed the city. "If this army of marauders were to reach Malaga," said he, "we should hardly be able to keep them without its walls. I will throw myself, with a small force, into the mountains, rouse the peasantry, take possession of the passes, and endeavour to give these Spanish cavaliers sufficient entertainment upon the road."

It was on a Wednesday that the prankling army of high-mettled warriors issued from the ancient gates of Antequera. They marched all day and night, making their way secretly, as they supposed, through the passes of the mountains. As the tract of country they intended to maraud was far in the Moorish territories, near the coast of the Mediterranean, they did not arrive there until late in the following day. In passing through these stern and lofty mountains, their path was often along the bottom of a barranco, or deep rocky valley, with a scanty stream dashing along it, among the loose rocks and stones which it had broken and rolled down in the time of its autumnal violence. Sometimes their road was a mere rambla, or dry bed of a torrent, cut deep into the mountains, and filled with their shattered fragments. These barrancas and ramblas were overhung by immense cliffs and precipices, forming the lurking places of ambuscades during the wars between the Moors and Spaniards, as in after times they have become the favourite haunts of robbers to waylay the unfortunate traveller.

As the sun went down, the cavaliers came to a lofty part of the mountains, commanding, to their right, a distant glimpse of a part of the fair vega of Malaga, with the blue Mediterranean beyond, and they hailed it with exultation as a glimpse of the promised land. As the night closed in, they reached the chain of little valleys and hamlets, locked up among these rocky heights, and known among the Moors by the name of the Axarquia. Here their vaunting hopes were destined to meet with the first disappointment. The inhabitants had heard of their approach; they had conveyed away their cattle and effects, and, with their wives and children, had taken refuge in the towers and fortresses of the mountains. Enraged at their disappointment, the troops set fire to the deserted houses, and pressed forward, hoping for better fortune as they advanced. Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and

the other cavaliers in the van-guard, spread out their forces, to lay waste the country; capturing a few lingering herds of cattle, with the Moorish peasants who were driving them to some place of safety. While this marauding party carried fire and sword in the advance, and lit up the mountain cliffs with the flames of the hamlets, the master of Santiago, who brought up the rear-guard, maintained strict order, keeping his knights together in martial array, ready for attack or defence should an enemy appear. The men-at-arms of the Holy Brotherhood attempted to roam in quest of booty, but he called them back, and rebuked them severely.

At length they came to a part of the mountain completely broken up by barrancas and ramblas of vast depth, and shagged with rocks and precipices. It was impossible to maintain the order of march; the horses had no room for action, and were scarcely manageable, having to scramble from rock to rock, and up and down frightful declivities, where there was scarce footing for a mountain goat. Passing by a burning village, the light of the flames revealed their perplexed situation. The Moors, who had taken refuge in a watchtower on an impending height, shouted with exultation when they looked down upon these glistering cavaliers, struggling and stumbling among the rocks. Sallying forth from their tower, they took possession of the cliffs which overhung the ravine, and hurled darts and stones upon the enemy. It was with the utmost grief of heart, that the good master of Santiago beheld his brave men falling like helpless victims around him, without the means of resistance or revenge. The confusion of his followers was increased by the shouts of the Moors, multiplied by the echoes of every crag and cliff, as if they were surrounded by innumerable foes. Being entirely ignorant of the country, in their struggles to extricate themselves they plunged into other glens and defiles, where they were still more exposed to danger. In this extremity, the master of Santiago despatched messengers in search of succour. The Marquis of Cadiz, like a loyal companion in arms, hastened to his aid with his cavalry. His approach checked the assaults of the enemy; and the master was at length enabled to extricate his troops from the defile. In the meantime, Don Alonzo de Aguilar and his companions, in their eager advance, had likewise got entangled in deep glens, and dry beds of torrents, where they had been

severely galled by the insulting attacks of a handful of Moorish peasants, posted on the impending precipices. The proud spirit of De Aguilar was incensed at having the game of war thus turned upon him, and his gallant forces domineered over, by mountain boors, whom he had thought to drive, like their own cattle, to Antequera. Hearing, however, that the Marquis of Cadiz and the master of Santiago were engaged with the enemy, he disregarded his own danger, and calling together his troops, returned to assist them, or rather, to partake of their perils. Being once more assembled together, the cavaliers held a hasty council, amidst the hurling of stones and whistling of arrows; and their resolves were quickened by the sight, from time to time, of some gallant companion in arms laid low. They determined, that there was no spoil in this part of the country to repay the extraordinary peril; and that it was better to abandon the herds they had already taken, which only embarrassed their march, and to retreat with all speed to less dangerous ground.

The adalides or guides were ordered to lead the way out of this place of carnage. These, thinking to conduct them by the most secure route, led them by a steep and rocky pass, difficult to the foot soldiers, but almost impracticable to the cavalry. It was overhung with precipices, whence showers of stones and arrows were poured upon them, accompanied by savage yells, which appalled the stoutest heart. In some places they could pass but one at a time, and were often transpierced, horse and rider, by the Moorish darts; the progress of their comrades impeded by their dying struggles. The surrounding precipices were lit up by a thousand alarm fires, and every crag and cliff had its flames, by the light of which they beheld their foes bounding from rock to rock, and looking more like fiends than mortal men. Either through terror and confusion, or through real ignorance of the country, their guides, instead of conducting them out of the mountains, led them deeper into their fatal recesses. The morning dawned upon them in a narrow rambla, its bottom filled with broken rocks, where once had raved along the mountain torrent, while above them beetled huge arid cliffs, over the brows of which they beheld the turbaned heads of their fierce and exulting foes. What a different appearance did the unfortunate cavaliers present, from the gallant band that marched so vauntingly out of Antequera! Covered with dust and blood

and wounds, and haggard with fatigue and horror, they looked like victims rather than warriors. Many of their banners were lost, and not a trumpet was heard, to rally their sinking spirits. The men turned with imploring eyes to their commanders, while the hearts of the cavaliers were ready to burst with rage and grief, at the merciless havoc made among their faithful followers.

All day they made ineffectual attempts to extricate themselves from the mountains. Columns of smoke rose from the heights where, in the preceding night, had blazed the alarm fire. The mountaineers assembled from every direction; they swarmed at every pass, getting in the advance of the Christians, and garrisoning the cliffs like so many towers and battlements.

Night closed again upon the Christians, when they were shut up in a narrow valley, traversed by a deep stream, and surrounded by precipices that seemed to reach the skies, and on which the alarm fires blazed and flared. Suddenly a new cry was heard resounding along the valley. "El Zagal! El Zagal!" echoed from cliff to cliff. "What cry is that?" said the master of Santiago. "It is the war cry of El Zagal, the Moorish general," said an old Castilian soldier: he must be coming in person with the troops of Malaga."

The worthy master turned to his knights: "Let us die," said he, "making a road with our hearts, since we cannot with our swords. Let us scale the mountain, and sell our lives dearly, instead of staying here to be tamely butchered."

So saying, he turned his steed against the mountain, and spurred him up its flinty side. Horse and foot followed his example; eager, if they could not escape, to have at least a dying blow at the enemy. As they struggled up the height, a tremendous storm of darts and stones was showered upon them by the Moors. Sometimes a fragment of rock came bounding and thundering down, ploughing its way through the centre of their host. The foot soldiers, faint with weariness and hunger, or crippled by wounds, held by the tails and manes of the horses, to aid them in their ascent, while the horses, losing their footing among the loose stones, or receiving some sudden wound, tumbled down the steep declivity, steed, rider, and soldier rolling from crag to crag, until they were dashed to pieces in the valley. In this desperate struggle, the alferez, or standard-bearer of the master, with his standard, was lost, as were many of his relations and his dearest friends. At

length he succeeded in attaining the crest of the mountain, but it was only to be plunged in new difficulties. A wilderness of rocks and rugged dells lay before him, beset by cruel foes. Having neither banner nor trumpet, by which to rally his troops, they wandered apart, each intent upon saving himself from the precipices of the mountains and the darts of the enemy. When the pious master of Santiago beheld the scattered fragments of his late gallant force, he could not restrain his grief. "O God!" exclaimed he, "great is thine anger this day against thy servants! Thou hast converted the cowardice of these infidels into desperate valour, and hast made peasants and boors victorious over armed men of battle!"

He would fain have kept with his foot soldiers, and, gathering them together, have made head against the enemy; but those around him entreated him to think only of his personal safety. To remain, was to perish without striking a blow; to escape, was to preserve a life, that might be devoted to vengeance on the Moors. The master reluctantly yielded to their advice. "O Lord of Hosts!" exclaimed he again, "from thy wrath do I fly, not from these infidels: they are but instruments in thy hands to chastise us for our sins!" So saying, he sent the guides in advance, and, putting spurs to his horse, dashed through a defile of the mountains, before the Moors could intercept him. The moment the master put his horse to speed, his troops scattered in all directions. Some endeadeavoured to follow his traces, but were confounded among the intricacies of the mountain. They fled hither and thither; many perishing among the precipices, others being slain by the Moors, and others taken prisoners.

The gallant Marquis of Cadiz, guided by his trusty adalid, Luis Amar, had ascended a different part of the mountain. He was followed by his friend, Don Alonzo de Aguilar, the adelantado, and the Count of Cifuentes; but, in the darkness and confusion, the bands of these commanders became separated from each other. When the marquis attained the summit, he looked around for his companions in arms; but they were no longer following him, and there was no trumpet to summon them. It was a consolation to the marquis, however, that his brothers, and several of his relations, with a number of his retainers, were still with him. He called his brothers by name, and their replies gave comfort to his heart.

His guide now led the way into another valley, where he

would be less exposed to danger. When he had reached the bottom of it, the marquis paused, to collect his scattered followers, and to give time for his fellow commanders to rejoin him. Here he was suddenly assailed by the troops of El Zagal, aided by the mountaineers from the cliffs. The Christians, exhausted and terrified, lost all presence of mind; most of them fled, and were either slain or taken captive. The marquis and his valiant brothers, with a few tried friends, made a stout resistance. His horse was killed under him; his brothers, Don Diego and Don Lope, with his two nephews, Don Lorenzo and Don Manuel, were, one by one, swept from his side; either transfixed with darts and lances by the soldiers of El Zagal, or crushed by stones from the heights. The marquis was a veteran warrior, and had been in many a bloody battle, but never before had death fallen so thick and close around him. When he saw his remaining brother, Don Beltram, struck out of his saddle by a fragment of a rock, and his horse running wildly about without his rider, he gave a cry of anguish, and stood bewildered and aghast. A few faithful followers surrounded him, and entreated him to fly for his life. He would still have remained, to have shared the fortunes of his friend, Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and his other companions in arms; but the forces of El Zagal were between him and them, and death was whistling by on every wind. Reluctantly, therefore, he consented to fly. Another horse was brought him: his faithful adalid guided him by one of the steepest paths, which lasted for four leagues; the enemy still hanging on his traces, and thinning the scanty ranks of his followers. At length the marquis reached the extremity of the mountain defiles, and, with a haggard remnant of his men, escaped by dint of hoof to Antequera.

The Count of Cifuentes, with a few of his retainers, in attempting to follow the Marquis of Cadiz, wandered into a narrow pass, where they were completely surrounded by the band of El Zagal. Finding all attempt at escape impossible, and resistance vain, the worthy count surrendered himself prisoner, as did also his brother, Don Pedro de Silva, and the few of his retainers who survived.

The dawn of day found Don Alonzo de Aguilar, with a handful of his adherents, still among the mountains. They had attempted to follow the Marquis of Cadiz, but had been obliged to pause and defend themselves against the thickening

forces of the enemy. They at length traversed the mountain, and reached the same valley where the marquis had made his last disastrous stand. Wearied and perplexed, they sheltered themselves in a natural grotto, under an overhanging rock, which kept off the darts of the enemy; while a bubbling fountain gave them the means of slaking their raging thirst, and refreshing their exhausted steeds. As day broke, the scene of slaughter unfolded its horrors. There lay the noble brothers and nephews of the gallant marquis, transfixed with darts, or gashed and bruised with unseemly wounds; while many other gallant cavaliers were stretched out dead and dying around, some of them partly stripped and plundered by the Moors. De Aguilar was a pious knight, but his piety was not humble and resigned, like that of the worthy master of Santiago. He imprecated holy curses upon the infidels, for having thus laid low the flower of Christian chivalry, and he vowed in his heart bitter vengeance upon the surrounding country. By degrees the little force of De Aguilar was augmented by numbers of fugitives, who issued from caves and chasms, where they had taken refuge in the night. A little band of mounted knights was gradually formed, and the Moors having abandoned the heights to collect the spoils of the slain, this gallant but forlorn squardon was enabled to retreat to Antequera.

This disastrous affair lasted from Thursday evening, throughout Friday, the twenty-first of March, the festival of St. Benedict. It is still recorded in Spanish calendars as the defeat of the mountains of Malaga; and the place where the greatest slaughter took place is pointed out to the present day, and is called *La cuesta de lamatanza*, or "the hill of the massacre." The principal leaders who survived returned to Antequera; many of the knights took refuge in Alhama, and others wandered about the mountains for eight days, living on roots and herbs, hiding themselves during the day, and roaming forth at night. So enfeebled and disheartened were they, that they offered no resistance if attacked. Three or four soldiers would surrender to a Moorish peasant, and even the women of Malaga sallied forth and made prisoners. Some were thrown into the dungeons of frontier towns; others led captive to Granada; but by far the greater number were conducted to Malaga, the city they had threatened to attack. Two hundred and fifty principal cavaliers, al-

caydes, commanders, and hidalgos, of generous blood, were confined in the alcazaba or citadel of Malaga, to await their ransom; and five hundred and seventy of the common soldiery were crowded in an enclosure or court-yard of the alcazaba, to be sold as slaves.*

Great spoils were collected of splendid armour and weapons taken from the slain, or thrown away by the cavaliers in their flight: and many horses, magnificently comparisoned, together with numerous standards; all which were paraded in triumph into the Moorish towns.

The merchants, also, who had come with the army, intending to traffic in the spoils of the Moors, were themselves made objects of traffic. Several of them were driven like cattle before the Moorish viragos to the market of Malaga, and, in spite of all their adroitness in trade, and their attempts to buy themselves off at a cheap ransom, they were unable to purchase their freedom without such draughts upon their money bags at home, as drained them to the very bottom.

CHAPTER XIII.

The people of Antequera had scarcely recovered from the tumult of excitement and admiration, caused by the departure of the gallant band of cavaliers upon their foray, when they beheld the scattered wrecks flying for refuge to their walls. Day after day, and hour after hour, brought some wretched fugitive in whose battered plight, and haggard, woebegone demeanour, it was almost impossible to recognise the warrior, whom they had lately seen to issue so gaily and gloriously from their gates.

The arrival of the Marquis of Cadiz, almost alone, covered with dust and blood, his armour shattered and defaced, his countenance the picture of despair, filled every heart with sorrow; for he was greatly beloved by the people. The multitude asked, where was the band of brothers, that rallied round him as he went forth to the field; and when they heard, that they had, one by one, been slaughtered at his side, they hushed their voices, or spoke to each other only in whispers as he passed, gazing at him in silent sympathy. No one attempted to console him in so great an affliction, nor did the good marquis speak ever a word, but shutting him-

* Cura de los Palacios.

self up, brooded in lonely anguish over his misfortune. It was only the arrival of Don Alonzo de Aguilar that gave him a gleam of consolation; for, amidst the shafts of death that had fallen so thickly among his family, he rejoiced that his chosen friend and brother in arms had ecaped uninjured.

For several days every eye was turned, in an agony of suspense, towards the Moorish border, anxiously looking, in every fugitive from the mountains, for the lineaments of some friend or relation, whose fate was yet a mystery. At length all doubt subsided into certainty; the whole extent of this great calamity was known, spreading grief and consternation throughout the land, and laying desolate the pride and hopes of palaces. It was a sorrow, that visited the marble hall and silken pillow. Stately dames mourned over the loss of their sons, the joy and glory of their age; and many a fair cheek was blanched with wo, that had lately mantled with secret admiration. "All Andalusia;" says an historian of the day, "was overwhelmed by a great affliction; there was no drying of the eyes which wept in her.*"

Fear and trembling reigned for a while along the frontier. Their spear seemed broken; their buckler cleft in twain. Every border town dreaded an attack, and the mother caught her infant to her bosom, when the watch-dog howled in the night, fancying it the war cry of the Moor. All for a time appeared lost, and despondency even found its way to the royal breast of Ferdinand and Isabella, amid the splendours of their court.

Great, on the other hand, was the joy of the Moors, when they saw whole legions of Christian warriors brought captive into their towns, by rude mountain pesantry. They thought it the work of Allah in favour of the faithful. But when they recognised, among the captives thus dejected and broken down, several of the proudest of Christian chivalry; when they saw several of the banners and devices of the noblest houses of Spain, which they had been accustomed to behold in the foremost of the battle, now trailed ignominiously through their streets; when, in short, they witnessed the arrival of the Count of Cifuentes, the royal standard-bearer of Spain, with his gallant brother, Don Petro de Silva, brought prisoners into the gates of Granada, there were no bounds to their exultation. They thought, that the days of their ancient

* Cura de los Palacios.

glory were about to return, and that they were to renew their career of triumph over the unbelievers.

The Christian historians of the time are sorely perplexed to account for this misfortune; and why so many Christian knights, fighting in the cause of the holy faith, should thus, miraculously as it were, be given captive to a handful of infidel boors; for we are assured, that all this rout and destruction was effected by five hundred foot and fifty horse, and these mere mountaineers, without science or discipline.* "It was intended," observes one historiographer, "as a lesson to their confidence and vain glory; overrating their own prowess, and thinking, that so chosen a band of chivalry had but to appear in the land of the enemy, and conquer. It was to teach them, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but that God alone giveth the victory."

The worthy father Fray Antonio Agapida, however, asserts it to be a punishment for the avarice of the Spanish warriors. "They did not enter the kingdom of the infidels with the pure spirit of Christian knights, zealous only for the glory of the faith; but rather as greedy men of trade, to enrich themselves by vending the spoils of the infidels. Instead of preparing themselves by confession and communion, and executing their testaments, and making donations to churches and convents, they thought only of arranging bargains and sales of their anticipated booty. Instead of taking with them holy monks, to aid them with their prayers, they were followed by a train of worldlings, to keep alive their secular and sordid ideas, and to turn what ought to be holy triumphs into scenes of brawling traffic." Such is the opinion of the excellent Agapida, in which he is joined by that most worthy and upright of chroniclers, the curate of Los Palacios. Agapida comforts himself, however, with the reflection, that this visitation was meant in mercy, to try the Castilian heart, and to extract from its present humiliation the elements of future success, as gold is extracted from amidst the impurities of earth; and in this reflection he is supported by the venerable historian, Pedro Abarca, of the society of Jesuits.†

* Cura de los Palacios.

† Abarca, Anales de Aragon, Rey 30. cap. 2. sect. 7.

CHAPTER XIV.

The defeat of the Christian cavaliers among the mountains of Malaga, and the successful inroad of Muley Aben Hassan into the lands of Medina Sidonia, had produced a favourable effect on the fortunes of the old monarch. The inconstant populace began to shout forth his name in the streets, and to sneer at the inactivity of his son, Boabdil el Chico. The latter, though in the flower of his age, and distinguished for vigour and dexterity in jousts and tournaments, had never yet fleshed his weapon in the field of battle; and it was murmured, that he preferred the silken repose of the cool halls of the Alhambra, to the fatigue and danger of the foray, and the hard encampments of the mountains.

The popularity of these rival kings depended upon their success against the Christians; and Boabdil el Chico found it necessary to strike some signal blow, to counterbalance the late triumph of his father. He was further incited by the fierce old Moor, his father-in-law, Ali Atar, alcayde of Loxa, with whom the coals of wrath against the Christians still burned amongst the ashes of age, and had lately been blown into a flame by the attack made by Ferdinand on the city under his command.

Ali Atar informed Boabdil, that the late discomfiture of the Christian knights had stripped Andalusia of the prime of her chivalry, and broken the spirit of the country. All the frontier of Cordova and Ecija now lay open to inroad; but he specially pointed out the city of Lucena as an object of attack; being feebly garrisoned, and lying in a country rich in pasturage, abounding in cattle and grain, in oil and wine. The fiery old Moor spoke from thorough information; for he had made many an incursion into those parts, and his very name was a terror throughout the country. It had become a bye-word in the garrison of Loxa, to call Lucena the garden of Ali Atar; for he was accustomed to forage its fertile territories for all his supplies.

Boabdil el Chico listened to the persuasions of this veteran of the borders. He assembled a force of nine thousand foot and seven hundred horse, most of them his own adherents, but many the partisans of his father: for both factions, however they might fight among themselves, were ready to unite in any expedition against the Christians. Many of the most

illustrious and valiant of the Moorish nobility assembled around his standard, magnificently arrayed, in sumptuous armour and rich embroidery, as though they were going to a festival, or a tilt of reeds, rather than an enterprise of iron war. Boabdil's mother, the sultana Ayxa la Horra, armed him for the field, and gave him her benediction as she girded his cimeter to his side. His favourite wife Morayma wept, as she thought of the evils that might befall him. "Why dost thou weep, daughter of Ali Atar?" said the high-minded Ayxa; "these tears become not the daughter of a warrior, nor the wife of a king. Believe me, there lurks more danger for a monarch within the strong walls of a palace, than within the frail curtains of a tent. It is by perils in the field, that thy husband must purchase security on his throne."

But Morayma still hung upon his neck with tears and sad forbodings; and when he departed from the Alhambra, she betook herself to her mirador, which looks out over the vega; whence she watched the army, as it passed in shining order along the road that leads to Loxa; and every burst of warlike melody that came swelling on the breeze was answered by a gush of sorrow.

As the royal cavalcade issued from the palace, and descended through the streets of Granada, the populace greeted their youthful sovereign with shouts, and anticipated success that should wither the laurels of his father. In passing through the gate of Elvira, however, the king accidentally broke his lance against the arch. At this, certain of his nobles turned pale, and entreated of him not to proceed, for they regarded it as an evil omen. Boabdil scoffed at their fears, for he considered them mere idle fancies; or rather, says Fray Antonio Agapida, he was an incredulous pagan, puffed up with confidence and vain glory. He refused to take another spear, but drew forth his cimeter, and led the way (adds Agapida) in an arrogant and haughty style, as though he would set both heaven and earth at defiance. Another evil omen was sent, to deter him from his enterprise. Arriving at the rambla or dry ravine of Beyro, which is scarcely a bowshot from the city, a fox ran through the whole army, and close by the person of the king, and, though a thousand bolts were discharged at it, escaped uninjured to the mountains. The principal courtiers about Boabdil now reiterated their remonstrances against proceeding; for they considered

these occurrences as mysterious portents of disasters to their army. The king, however, was not to be dismayed, but continued to march forward.*

At Loxa the royal army was reinforced by old Ali Atar, with the chosen horsemen of his garrison, and many of the bravest warriors of the border towns. The people of Loxa shouted with exultation, when they beheld Ali Atar armed at all points, and once more mounted on his Barbary steed, which had often borne him over the borders. The veteran warrior, with nearly a century of years upon his head, had all the fire and animation of a youth at the prospect of a foray, and careered from rank to rank with the velocity of an Arab of the desert. The populace watched the army as it paraded over the bridge, and wound into the passes of the mountains; and still their eyes were fixed upon the pennon of Ali Atar, as if it bore with it an assurance of victory.

The Moorish army entered the Christian frontier by forced marches, hastily ravaging the country, driving off the flocks and herds, and making captives of the inhabitants. They pressed on furiously, and made the latter part of their march in the night, that they might elude observation, and come upon Lucena by surprise. Boabdil was inexperienced in the art of war; but he had a veteran counsellor in his old father-in-law: for Ali Atar knew every secret of the country; and as he prowled through it, his eye ranged over the land, uniting, in its glare, the craft of the fox, with the sanguinary ferocity of the wolf. He had flattered himself, that their march had been so rapid, as to outstrip intelligence, and that Lucena would be an easy capture; when, suddenly, he beheld alarm fires blazing upon the mountains. "We are discovered," said he to Boabdil el Chico; "The country will be up in arms. We have nothing left, but to strike boldly for Lucena; it is but slightly garrisoned, and we may carry it by assault, before it can receive assistance." The king approved of his council, and they marched rapidly for the gate of Lucena.

CHAPTER XV.

Don Diego de Cordova, Count of Cabra, was in the castle of Vaena, which, with the town of the same name, is situated on a lofty sunburnt hill, on the frontier of the

* Marmol. Rebel. de los Moros, lib. i. c. 12. fol. 14.

kingdom, of Cordova, and but a few leagues from Lucena. The range of mountains from Horquera lie between them. The castle of Vacna was strong, and well furnished with arms; and the Count had a numerous band of vassals and retainers: for it behoved the noblemen of the frontiers in those times to be well prepared, with man and horse, with lance and buckler, to resist the sudden incursions of the Moors. The Count of Cabra was a hardy and experienced warrior; shrewd in council, prompt in action, rapid and fearless in the field. He was one of the bravest cavaliers for an inroad, and had been quickened and sharpened in thought and action by living on the borders.

On the night of the 20th of April, 1483, the Count was about to retire to rest, when the watchman from the turret brought him word, that there were alarm fires on the mountains of Horquera, and that they were made on the signal tower, overhanging the defile, through which the road passes to Cabra and Lucena.

The count ascended the battlements, and beheld five lights blazing on the tower; a sign that there was a Moorish army attacking some place on the frontier. The Count instantly ordered the alarm-bells to be sounded, and despatched couriers to rouse the commanders of the neighbouring towns. He ordered all his retainers to prepare for action, and sent a trumpet through the town, summoning the men to assemble at the castle gate at daybreak, armed and equipped for the field.

Throughout the remainder of the night, the castle resounded with the din of preparation. Every house in the town was in equal bustle; for in these frontier towns every house had its warrior, and the lance and buckler were ever hanging against the wall, ready to be snatched down for instant service. Nothing was heard but the noise of armourers, the shoeing of steeds, and furbishing of weapons, and all night long the alarm fires kept blazing on the mountain.

When the morning dawned, the Count of Cabra sallied forth, at the head of two hundred and fifty cavaliers, of the best families of Vacna; all well appointed, exercised in arms, and experienced in the warfare of the borders. There were, besides, twelve hundred foot soldiers; all brave and well seasoned men of the same town. The Count ordered them to hasten forward, whoever could make most speed, taking the

road to Cabra, which was three leagues distant. That they might not loiter on the road, he allowed none of them to break their fast, until they arrived at that place. The provident Count despatched couriers in advance; and the little army, on reaching Cabra, found tables spread with food and refreshments at the gates of the town. There they were joined by Don Alonzo de Cordova, senior of Zuheros.

Having made a hearty repast, they were on the point of resuming their march, when the Count discovered, that, in the hurry of his departure from home, he had forgotten to bring the standard of Vaena, which, for upwards of eighty years, had always been borne to battle by his family. It was now noon, and there was not time to return. He took, therefore, the standard of Cabra, the device of which is a goat, and which had not been seen in the wars for the last half century. When about to depart, a courier came galloping at full speed, bringing missives to the Count, from his nephew, Don Diego Hernandez de Cordova, senior of Lucena, and alcayde de los Donzeles, entreating him to hasten to his aid, as his town was beset by the Moorish king, Boabdil el Chico, with a powerful army, who were actually setting fire to the gates.

The Count put his little army instantly in movement for Lucena, which is only one league from Cabra. He was fired with the idea of having the Moorish king in person to contend with. By the time he reached Lucena, the Moors had desisted from the attack, and were ravaging the surrounding country. He entered the town with a few of his cavaliers, and was received with joy by his nephew, whose whole force consisted but of eighty horse and three hundred foot. Don Diego Hernandez de Cordova was a young man; yet he was a prudent, careful, and capable officer. Having learned, the evening before, that the Moors had passed the frontiers, he had gathered within his walls all the women and children from the environs; had armed the men, sent couriers in all directions for succour, and had lighted alarm-fires on the mountains.

Boabdil had arrived with his army at daybreak, and had sent in a message, threatening to put the garrison to the sword, if the place were not instantly surrendered. The messenger was a Moor of Granada, named Hamet, whom Don Diego had formerly known. He contrived to amuse

him with negociation, to gain time for succour to arrive. The fierce old Ali Atar, losing all patience, had made an assault upon the town, and stormed like a fury at the gate; but had been repulsed. Another and more serious attack was expected in the course of the night.

When the Count de Cabra had heard this account of the situation of affairs, he turned to his nephew, with his usual alacrity of manner, and proposed that they should immediately sally forth in quest of the enemy. The prudent Don Diego remonstrated at the rashness of attacking so great a force with a mere handful of men. "Nephew," said the count, "I came from Vaena with a determination to fight this Moorish king, and I will not be disappointed."

"At any rate," replied Don Diego, "let us wait but two hours, and we shall have reinforcements, which have been promised me from Rambla, Santaella, Montilla, and other places in the neighbourhood." "If we wait, these," said the hardy count, "the Moors will be off, and all our trouble will have been in vain. You may await them, if you please: I am resolved on fighting."

The count paused not for a reply; but, in his prompt and rapid manner, sallied forth to his men. The young alcayde de los Donzeles, through more prudent than his ardent uncle, was equally brave. He determined to stand by him in his rash enterprise; and summoning his little force, marched forth, to join the count, who was already on the alert. They then proceeded together in quest of the enemy.

The Moorish army had ceased ravaging the country, and were not to be seen, the neighbourhood being hilly, and broken with deep ravines. The count despatched six scouts on horseback, to reconnoitre, ordering them to return with all speed when they should have discovered the enemy, and by no means to engage in skirmishing with stragglers. The scouts, ascending a high hill, beheld the Moorish army in a valley behind it; the cavalry ranged in five battalions, keeping guard, while the foot soldiers were seated on the grass, making a repast. They returned immediately with the intelligence.

The count now ordered the troops to march in the direction of the enemy. He and his nephew ascended the hill, and saw, that the five battalions of Moorish cavalry had been formed into two; one of about nine hundred lances, the other

of about six hundred. The whole force seemed prepared to march for the frontier. The foot soldiers were already in motion, with many prisoners, and a great train of mules and beasts of burden, laden with booty. At a distance was Boabdil el Chico. They could not distinguish his person; but they knew him by his superb white charger, magnificently caparisoned; and by his being surrounded by a numerous guard, sumptuously armed and attired. Old Ali Atar was careering about the valley with his usual impatience, hurrying the march of the loitering troops.

The eyes of the Count de Cabra glistened with eager joy, as he beheld the royal prize within his reach. The immense disparity of their forces never entered into his mind. "By Santiago!" said he to his nephew, as they hastened down the hill, "had we waited for more forces, the Moorish king and his army would have escaped us!"

The count now harangued his men, to inspirit them to this hazardous encounter. He told them not to be dismayed at the number of the Moors; for God often permitted the few to conquer the many; and he had great confidence, that. through the divine aid, they were that day to achieve a signal victory, which should win them both riches and renown. He commanded, that no man should hurl his lance at the enemy, but should keep it in his hands, and strike as many blows with it as he could. He warned them, also, never to shout, except when the Moors did; for when both armies shouted together, there was no perceiving which made the most noise, and was the strongest. He desired his uncle, Lope de Mendoza, and Diego Cabrera, alcayde of Menica, to alight, and enter on foot, in the battalion of infantry, to animate them to the combat. He appointed, also, the alcayde of Vaena, and Diego de Clavijo, a cavalier of his household, to remain in the rear, and not to permit any one to lag behind, either to despoil the dead, or for any other purpose.

Such were the orders given by this most adroit, active, and intrepid cavalier to his little army; supplying, by admirable sagacity and subtle management, the want of a more numerous force. His orders being given, and all arrangements made, he threw aside his lance, drew his sword, and commanded his standard to be advanced against the enemy.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE Moorish king had descried the Spanish forces at a distance, although a slight fog prevented his seeing them distinctly, and ascertaining their numbers. His old father-in-law, Ali Atar, was by his side, who, being a veteran marauder, was well acquainted with all the standards and armorial bearings of the frontiers. When the king beheld the ancient and long disused banner of Cabra emerging from the mist, he turned to Ali Atar, and demanded whose ensign it was. The old borderer was for once at a loss; for the banner had not been displayed in battle in his time.

"Sire," replied he, after a pause, "I have been considering that standard, but do not know it. It appears to be a dog, which is a device borne by the towns of Baeza and Ubeda. If it be so, all Andalusia is in movement against you; for it is not probable, that any single commander or community would venture to attack you. I would advise you, therefore, to retire."

The Count of Cabra, in winding down the hill towards the Moors, found himself on a much lower station than the enemy: he therefore ordered in all haste, that his standard should be taken back, so as to gain the vantage ground. The Moors, mistaking this for a retreat, rushed impetuously towards the Christians. The latter, having gained the height proposed, charged down upon them at the same moment, with the battle-cry of "Santiago!" and, dealing the first blows, laid many of the Moorish cavaliers in the dust.

The Moors, thus checked in their tumultuous assault, were thrown into confusion, and began to give way, the Christians following hard upon them. Boabdil el Chico endeavoured to rally them. "Hold! hold! for shame!" cried he: "let us not fly, at least until we know our enemy!" The Moorish chivalry were stung by this reproof, and turned to make front, with the valour of men, who feel that they are fighting under their monarch's eye.

At this moment, Lorenzo de Porres, alcayde of Luque, arrived with fifty horse and one hundred foot, sounding an Italian trumpet from among a copse of oak trees, which concealed his force. The quick ear of old Ali Atar caught the note. "That is an Italian trumpet," said he to the king; "the whole world seems in arms against your majesty!"

The trumpet of Lorenzo de Porres was answered by that of the Count de Cabra in another direction; and it seemed to the Moors as if they were between two armies. Don Lorenzo, sallying from among the oaks, now charged upon the enemy. The latter did not wait to ascertain the force of this new foe. The confusion, the variety of alarms, the attacks from opposite quarters, the obscurity of the fog, all conspired to deceive them as to the number of their adversaries. Broken and dismayed, they retreated fighting; and nothing but the presence and remonstrances of the king prevented their retreat from becoming a headlong flight.

This skirmishing retreat lasted for about three leagues. Many were the acts of individual prowess between Christian and Moorish knights; and the way was strewed by the flower of the king's guards, and of his royal household. At length they came to the rivulet of Mingonzalez, the verdant banks of which were covered with willows and tamarisks. It was swollen by recent rain, and was now a deep and turbid torrent.

Here the king made a courageous stand, with a small body of cavalry, while his baggage crossed the stream. None but the choicest and most loyal of his guards stood by their monarch in this hour of extremity. The foot soldiers took to flight the moment they passed the ford; many of the horsemen, partaking of the general panic, gave reins to their steeds, and scoured for the frontier. The little host of devoted cavaliers now serried their forces in front of their monarch, to protect his retreat. They fought hand to hand with the Christian warriors; disdaining to yield, or to ask for quarter. The ground was covered with the dead and dying. The king, having retreated along the river banks, and gained some distance from the scene of combat, looked back, and saw the loyal band at length give way. They crossed the ford, followed pell mell by the enemy, and several of them were struck down into the stream.

The king now dismounted from his white charger, whose colour and rich caparison made him too conspicuous, and endeavoured to conceal himself among the thickets which fringed the river. A soldier of Lucena, named Martin Hurtado, discovered him, and attacked him with a pike. The king defended himself with cimeter and target, until another soldier assailed him, and he saw a third approaching. Perceiving that further resistance would be vain, he drew back.

and called upon them to desist, offering them a noble ransom. One of the soldiers rushed forward to seize him; but the king struck him to the earth with a blow of his cimeter.

Don Diego Fernandez de Cordova coming up at this moment, the men said to him, "Señor, here is a Moor that we have taken, who seems to be a man of rank, and offers a large ransom."

"Slaves!" exclaimed King Boabdil, "you have not taken me. I surrender to this cavalier."

Don Diego received him with knightly courtesy. He perceived him to be a person of high rank; but the king concealed his quality, and gave himself out as the son of Aben Aleyzer, a nobleman of the royal household.* Don Diego gave him in charge of five soldiers, to conduct him to the castle of Lucena; then putting spurs to his horse, he hastened to rejoin the Count de Cabra, who was in hot pursuit of the enemy. He overtook him at a stream called Riancal, and they continued to press on the skirts of the flying army during the remainder of the day. The pursuit was almost as hazardous as the battle; for had the enemy at any time recovered from their panic, they might, by a sudden reaction, have overwhelmed the small force of their pursuers. To guard against this peril, the wary count kept his battalion always in close order, and had a body of a hundred chosen lances in the advance. The Moors kept up a Parthian retreat. Several times they turned to make battle; but seeing this solid body of steeled warriors pressing upon them, they again took to flight.

The main retreat of the army was along the valley watered by the Xenil, and opening through the mountains of Algaringo to the city of Loxa. The alarm fires of the preceding night had roused the country. Every man snatched sword and buckler from the wall; and the towns and villages poured forth their warriors, to harass the retreating foe. Ali Atar kept the main force of the army together, and turned fiercely from time to time upon his pursuers. He was like a wolf hunted through the country he had often made desolate by his maraudings.

The alarm of this invasion had reached the city of Antequera, where were several of the cavaliers who had escaped from the carnage in the mountains of Malaga. Their proud

* Garibay, lib. xl. cap. 31.

minds were festering with their late disgrace, and their only prayer was for vengeance on the infidels. No sooner did they hear of the Moors being over the border, than they were armed and mounted for action. Don Alonzo de Aguilar led them forth: a small body, of but forty horsemen; but all cavaliers of prowess, and thirsting for revenge. They came upon the foe on the banks of the Xenil, where it winds through the valleys of Cordova. The river, swelled by the late rains, was deep and turbulent, and only fordable at certain places. The main body of the army was gathered in confusion on the banks, endeavouring to ford the stream, protected by the cavalry of Ali Atar.

No sooner did the little band of Alonzo de Aguilar come in sight of the Moors, than fury flashed from their eyes. "Remember the mountains of Malaga!" they cried to each other, as they rushed to combat. Their charge was desperate, but was gallantly resisted. A scrambling and bloody fight ensued, hand to hand, and sword to sword, sometimes on land, sometimes in the water; many were lanced on the banks: others, throwing themselves into the river, sunk with the weight of their armour, and were drowned. Some, grappling together, fell from their horses, but continued their struggle in the waves, and helm and turban rolled together down the stream. The Moors were by far the superior in number, and among them were many warriors of rank; but they were disheartened by defeat, while the Christians were excited even to desperation.

Ali Atar alone preserved all his fire and energy amid his reverses. He had been enraged at the defeat of the army, the loss of the king, and the ignominious flight he had been obliged to make, through a country which had so often been the scene of his exploits: but to be thus impeded in his flight, and harassed and insulted by a mere handful of warriors, roused the violent passions of the old Moor to perfect frenzy.

He had marked Don Alonzo de Aguilar dealing his blows, says Agapida, with the pious vehemence of a righteous knight, who knows that in every wound inflicted upon the infidels he is doing God service. Ali Atar spurred his steed along the bank of the river, to come upon Don Alonzo by surprise. The back of that warrior was towards him; and, collecting all his force, the Moor hurled his lance, to transfix him on the spot. The lance was not thrown with the usual

accuracy of Ali Atar. It tore away a part of the cuirass of Don Alonzo, but failed to inflict a wound. The Moor rushed upon Don Alonzo with his cimeter; but the latter was on the alert, and parried his blow. They fought desperately upon the borders of the river, alternately pressing each other into the stream, and fighting their way again up the bank. Ali Atar was repeatedly wounded; and Don Alonzo, having pity on his age, would have spared his life. He called upon him to surrender. "Never!" cried Ali Atar, "to a Christian dog!" The words were scarce out of his mouth, when the sword of Don Alonzo clove his turbaned head, and sank deep into the brain. He fell dead without a groan: his body rolled into the Xenil; nor was it ever found and recognised.* Thus fell Ali Atar, who had long been the terror of Andalusia. As he had hated and warred upon the Christians all his life, so he died in the very act of bitter hostility.

The fall of Ali Atar put an end to the transient stand of the cavalry. Horse and foot mingled together in the desperate struggle across the Xenil, and many were trampled down, and perished beneath the waves. Don Alonzo and his band continued to harass them, until they crossed the frontier; and every blow struck home to the Moors seemed to lighten the load of humiliation and sorrow, which had weighed heavy on their hearts.

In this disastrous rout, the Moors lost upwards of five thousand killed and made prisoners, many of whom were of the most noble lineages of Granada. Numbers fled to rocks and mountains, where they were subsequently taken. This battle was called by some the battle of Lucena; by others the battle of the Moorish king, because of the capture of Boabdil. Twenty-two banners fell into the hands of the Christians, and were carried to Vaena, and hung up in the church, where, says an historian of after times, they remain to this day. Once a year, on the day of St. George, they are borne about in procession by the inhabitants, who at the same time give thanks to God, for this signal victory granted to their forefathers.

Great was the triumph of the Count de Cabra, when, on returning from the pursuit of the enemy, he found, that the Moorish king had fallen into his hands. When the unfortunate Boabdil was brought before him, however, and he beheld

* Cura de los Palacios.

him a dejected captive, whom, but shortly before, he had seen in royal splendour, surrounded by his army, the generous heart of the count was touched by sympathy. He said every thing that became a courteous and Christian knight, to comfort him; observing, that the same mutability of things, which had suddenly destroyed his recent prosperity, might cause his present misfortunes as rapidly to pass away; since, in this world, nothing is stable, and even sorrow has its allotted term.

Thus consoling him by gentle and soothing words, and observing towards him the honour and reverence that his dignity and his misfortunes inspired, he conducted him a prisoner to his strong castle of Vaena.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE sentinels looked out from the watchtowers of Loxa, along the valley of the Xenil which passes through the mountains of Algaringo. They looked to behold the king returning in triumph, at the head of his shining host, laden with the spoil of the unbeliever. They looked, to behold the standard of their warlike idol, the fierce Ali Atar, born by the chivalry of Loxa, ever foremost in the wars of the border.

In the evening of the 21st of April, they descried a single horseman, urging his faltering steed along the banks of the river. As he drew near, they perceived by the flash of arms, that he was a warrior; and, on nearer approach, by the richness of his armour, and the caparison of his steed, they knew him to be a warrior of rank.

He reached Loxa faint and aghast; his Arabian courser covered with foam and dust and blood, panting and staggering with fatigue, and gashed with wounds. Having brought his master in safety, he sunk down and died, before the gate of the city. The soldiers at the gate gathered round the cavalier, as he stood, mute and melancholy, by his expiring steed. They knew him to be the gallant Cidi Caleb, nephew of the chief alfaqui of the albaycen of Granada. When the people of Loxa beheld this noble cavalier thus alone, haggard and dejected, their hearts were filled with fearful forebodings.

"Cavalier," said they, "how fares it with the king and army?" He cast his hand mournfully towards the land of

the Christians. "There they lie!" exclaimed he: "the heavens have fallen upon them! all are lost! all dead*!"

Upon this there was a great cry of consternation among the people, and loud wailings of women; for the flower of the youth of Loxa were with the army. An old Moorish soldier, scarred in many a border battle, stood leaning on his lance by the gateway. "Where is Ali Atar?" demanded he eagerly. "If he still live, the army cannot be lost!"

"I saw his turban cloven by the Christian sword," replied Cidi Caleb. "His body is floating in the Xenil."

When the soldier heard these words, he smote his breast, and threw dust upon his head; for he was an old follower of Ali Atar.

The noble Cidi Caleb gave himself no repose; but, mounting another steed, hastened to carry the disastrous tidings to Granada. As he passed through the villages and hamlets, he spread sorrow around; for their chosen men had followed the king to the wars.

When he entered the gates of Granada, and announced the loss of the king and army, a voice of horror went throughout the city. Every one thought but of his own share in the general calamity, and crowded round the bearer of ill tidings. One asked after a father, another after a brother, some after a lover, and many a mother after her son. His replies were still of wounds and death. To one he replied, "I saw thy father pierced with a lance, as he defended the person of the king." To another, "Thy brother fell wounded under the hoofs of the horses; but there was no time to aid him, for the Christian Cavalry were upon us." To a third, "I saw the horse of thy lover covered with blood, and galloping without his rider." To a fourth, "Thy son fought by my side on the banks of the Xenil: we were surrounded by the enemy, and driven into the stream. I heard him call aloud upon Allah in the midst of the waters: when I reached the other bank, he was no longer by my side!"

The noble Cidi Caleb passed on, leaving Granada in lamentation. He urged his steed up the steep avenue of trees and fountains, that leads to the Alhambra, nor stopped until he arrived before the gate of justice. Ayxa, the mother of Boabdil, and Morayma, his beloved and tender wife, had daily watched, from the tower of the Gomeres, to behold his trium-

* Cura de los Palacios.

phant return. Who shall describe their affliction, when they heard the tidings of Cidi Caleb? The sultana Ayxa spake not much, but sate as one entranced in wo. Every now and then a deep sigh burst forth: but she raised her eyes to Heaven. ' "It is the will of Allah!" said she; and with these words she endeavoured to repress the agonies of a mother's sorrow. The tender Morayma threw herself on the earth, and gave way to the full turbulence of her feelings, bewailing her husband and her father. The high-minded Ayxa rebuked the violence of her grief. "Moderate these transports, my daughter," said she; "remember, magnanimity should be the attribute of princes: it becomes not them to give way to clamorous sorrow, like common and vulgar minds." But Morayma could only deplore her loss with the anguish of a tender woman. She shut herself up in her mirador, and gazed all day with streaming eyes upon the vega. Every object before her recalled the causes of her affliction. The river Xenil, which ran shining amidst the groves and gardens, was the same on the banks of which had perished her father, Ali Atar: before her lay the road to Loxa, by which Boabdil had departed in martial state, surrounded by the chivalry of Granada. Ever and anon she would burst into an agony of grief. "Alas, my father!" she would exclaim, "the river runs smiling before me, that covers thy mangled remains! who will gather them to an honoured tomb, in the land of the unbeliever? And thou, oh, Boabdil! light of my eyes! joy of my heart! life of my life! Wo the day, and wo the hour that I saw thee depart from these walls! The road by which thou hast departed is solitary; never will it be gladdened by thy return! The mountain thou hast traversed lies like a cloud in the distance, and all beyond it is darkness!"

The royal minstrels were summoned, to assuage the sorrows of the queen: they attuned their instruments to cheerful strains; but, in a little while, the anguish of their hearts prevailed, and turned their songs to lamentations.

"Beautiful Granada!" they exclaimed, "how is thy glory faded! The vivarrambla no longer echoes to the tramp of steed, and sound of trumpet: no longer is it crowded with thy youthful nobles, eager to display their prowess in the tourney and the festive tilt of reeds. Alas! the flower of thy chivalry lies low in a foreign land! The soft note of the lute is no longer heard in thy mournful streets, the lively castanet

is silent upon thy hills, and the graceful dance of the zambra is no more seen beneath thy bowers. Behold, the Alhambra is forlorn and desolate! In vain do the orange and myrtle breathe their perfumes into its silken chambers; in vain does the nightingale sing within its groves; in vain are its marble halls refreshed by the sound of fountains, and the gush of limpid rills! Alas! the countenance of the king no longer shines within those halls; the light of the Alhambra is set for ever!"

Thus all Granada, say the Arabian chroniclers, gave itself up to lamentations; there was nothing but the voice of wailing from the palace to the cottage. All joined to deplore their youthful monarch, cut down in the freshness and promise of his youth. Many feared that the prediction of the astrologer was about to be fulfilled, and that the downfal of the kingdom would follow the death of Boabdil; while all declared, that, had he survived, he was the very sovereign calculated to restore the realm to its ancient prosperity and glory.

CHAPTER XVIII.

An unfortunate death atones with the world for a multitude of errors. While the populace thought their youthful monarch had perished in the field, nothing could exceed their grief for his loss, and their adoration of his memory: when, however, they learned that he was still alive, and had surrendered himself captive to the Christians, their feelings underwent an instant change. They decried his talents as a commander, his courage as a soldier. They railed at his expedition, as rash and ill-conducted; and they reviled him for not having dared to die on the field of battle, rather than surrender to the enemy.

The alfaquis, as usual, mingled with the populace, and artfully guided their discontents. "Behold," exclaimed they, "the prediction is accomplished, which was pronounced at the birth of Boabdil! He has been seated on the throne, and the kingdom has suffered downfal and disgrace by his defeat and captivity. Comfort yourselves, oh Moslems! The evil day has passed by: the fates are satisfied; the sceptre, which has been broken in the feeble hand of Boabdil, is destined to resume its former power and sway, in the vigorous grasp of Aben Hassan."

The people were struck with the wisdom of these words. They rejoiced, that the baleful prediction, which had so long hung over them, was at an end; and declared, that none but Muley Aben Hassan had the valour and capacity necessary for the protection of the kingdom in this time of trouble.

The longer the captivity of Boabdil continued, the greater grew the popularity of his father. One city after another renewed allegiance to him: for power attracts power, and fortune creates fortune. At length he was enabled to return to Granada, and establish himself once more in the Alhambra. At his approach, his repudiated spouse, the sultana Ayxa, gathered together the family and treasures of her captive son, and retired with a handful of the nobles into the albaycen, the rival quarter of the city, the inhabitants of which still retained feelings of loyalty to Boabdil. Here she fortified herself, and held the semblance of a court, in the name of her son. The fierce Muley Aben Hassan would have willingly carried fire and sword into this factious quarter of the capital; but he dared not confide in his new and uncertain popularity. Many of the nobles detested him for his past cruelty; and a large portion of the soldiery, beside many of the people of his own party, respected the virtues of Ayxa la Horra, and pitied the misfortunes of Boabdil. Granada, therefore, presented the singular spectacle of two sovereignties within the same city. The old king fortified himself in the lofty towers of the Alhambra, as much against his own subjects as against the Christians: while Ayxa, with the zeal of a mother's affection, which waxes warmer and warmer towards her offspring when in adversity, still maintained the standard of Boabdil on the rival fortress of the alcazaba; and kept his powerful faction alive within the walls of the albaycin.

CHAPTER XIX.

The unfortunate Boabdil remained a prisoner, closely guarded in the castle of Vaena. From the towers of his prison he beheld the town below filled with armed men; and the lofty hill on which it was built, girdled by massive walls and ramparts, on which a vigilant watch was maintained, night and day. The mountains around were studed with watch-towers, overlooking the lonely roads which led to Granada; so that a turban could not stir over the border without the alarm being

given, and the whole country put on the alert. Boabdil saw, that there was no hope of escape from such a fortress, and that any attempt to rescue him would be equally in vain. His heart was filled with anxiety, as he thought on the confusion and ruin which his captivity must cause in his affairs; while sorrows of a softer kind overcame his fortitude, as he thought on the evils it might bring upon his family.

The Count de Cabra, though he maintained the most vigilant guard over his royal prisoner, yet treated him with profound deference. He had appointed the noblest apartments in the castle for his abode, and sought in every way to cheer him during his captivity. A few days only had passed away, when missives arrived from the Castilian sovereigns. Ferdinand had been transported with joy at hearing of the capture of the Moorish monarch; seeing the deep and politic uses that might be made of such an event: but the magnanimous spirit of Isabella was filled with compassion for the unfortunate captive. Their messages to Boabdil were full of sympathy and consolation; breathing that high and gentle courtesy, which dwells in noble minds.

This magnanimity in his foe cheered the dejected spirit of the captive monarch. "Tell my sovereigns, the king and the queen," said he to the messenger, "that I can not be unhappy, being in the power of such high and mighty princes; especially since they partake so largely of that grace and goodness, which Allah bestows upon the monarchs whom he greatly loves. Tell them, further, that I had long thought of submitting myself to their sway, to receive the kingdom of Granada from their hands, in the same manner that my ancestor received it from King John II., father of the gracious queen. My greatest sorrow, in this my captivity, is, that I must appear to do that from force, which I would fain have done from inclination."

In the mean time, Muley Aben Hassan, finding the faction of his son still formidable in Granada, was anxious to consolidate his power, by gaining possession of the person of Boabdil. For this purpose, he sent an embassy to the Catholic monarchs, offering large terms for the ransom, or rather the purchase, of his son; proposing, among other conditions, to release the Count of Cifuentes, and nine other of his most distinguished captives, and to enter into a treaty of confederacy with the sovereigns. Neither did the implacable

father make any scruple of testifying his indifference, whether his son were delivered up alive or dead, so that his person were placed assuredly within his power.

The humane heart of Isabella revolted at the idea of giving up the unfortunate prince into the hands of his most unnatural and inveterate enemy. A disdainful refusal was therefore returned to the old monarch, whose message had been couched in a vaunting spirit. He was informed, that the Castilian sovereigns would listen to no proposals of peace from Muley Aben Hassan, until he should lay down his arms, and offer them in all humility. Overtures in a different spirit were made by the mother of Boabdil, the sultana Ayxa la Horra, with the concurrence of the party which still remained faithful to him. It was thereby proposed, that Mahomet Abdalla, otherwise called Boabdil, should hold his crown as vassal to the Castilian sovereigns; paying an annual tribute, and releasing seventy Christian captives annually for five years: that he should moreover pay a large sum upon the spot for his ransom, and at the same time give freedom to four hundred Christians, to be chosen by the king: that he should also engage to be always ready to render military aid; and should come to the Cortes, or assemblage of nobles and distinguished vassals of the crown, whenever summoned. His only son, and the sons of twelve distinguished Moorish houses, were to be delivered as hostages.

King Ferdinand was at Cordova when he received this proposition; Queen Isabella was absent at the time. He was anxious to consult her in so momentous an affair; or rather, he was fearful of proceeding too precipitately, and not drawing from this fortunate event all the advantage of which it was susceptible. Without returning any reply, therefore, to the mission, he sent missives to the castle of Vaena, where Boabdil remained in courteous durance of the brave Count de Cabra, ordering that the captive monarch should be brought to Cordova.

The Count de Cabra set out with his illustrious prisoner; but when he arrived at Cordova, King Ferdinand declined seeing the Moorish monarch.

He was still undetermined what course to pursue; whether to retain him prisoner, set him at liberty on ransom, or treat him with politic magnanimity; and each course would require a different kind of reception. Until this point should be

resolved. therefore, he gave him in charge to Martin de Alarcon, alcayde of the ancient fortress of Porcuna, with orders to guard him strictly, but to treat him with the distinction and deference due to a prince. These commands were strictly obeyed, and. with the exception of being restrained in his liberty, the monarch was as nobly entertained as he could have been in his royal palace at Granada.

In the meantime, Ferdinand availed himself of this critical moment. while Granada was distracted with factions and dissensions, and before he had concluded any treaty with Boabdil, to make a puissant and ostentatious inroad into the very heart of the kingdom, at the head of his most illustrious nobles. He sacked and destroyed several towns and castles, and extended his ravages to the very gates of Granada. Old Muley Aben Hassan did not venture to oppose him. His city was filled with troops; but he was uncertain of their affection. He dreaded, that, should he sally forth, the gates of Granada might be closed against him by the faction of the albaycin.

"The old Moor stood on the lofty tower of the Alhambra," says Antonio Agapida, "grinding his teeth, and foaming like a tiger shut up in his cage, as he beheld the glittering battalions of the Christians wheeling about the vega, and the standard of the cross shining forth from amidst the smoke of infidel villages and hamlets. The most catholic king," continues Agapida, "would gladly have persevered in this righteous ravage, but his munitions began to fail. Satisfied, therefore, with having laid waste the country of the enemy, and insulted old Muley Aben Hassan in his very capital, he returned to Cordova covered with laurels, and his army loaded with spoils, and now bethought himself of coming to an immediate decision in regard to his royal prisoner."

CHAPTER XX.

A STATELY conversation was held by King Ferdinand, in the ancient city of Cordova, composed of several of the most reverend prelates and renowned cavaliers of the kingdom, to determine upon the fate of the unfortunate Boabdil.

Don Alonzo de Cardenas, the worthy master of Santiago, was one of the first who gave his counsel. He was a pious and zealous knight, rigid in his devotion to the faith; and his holy zeal had been inflamed to peculiar vehemence since his

disastrous crusade among the mountains of Malaga. He inveighed with ardour against any compromise or compact with the infidels. The object of this war, he observed, was not the subjection of the Moors, but their utter expulsion from the land, so that there might no longer remain a single stain of Mahometanism throughout Christian Spain. He gave it as his opinion, therefore, that the captive king ought not to be set at liberty.

Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, the valiant marquis of Cadiz, on the contrary, spoke warmly for the release of Boabdil. He pronounced it a measure of sound policy, even if done without conditions. It would tend to keep up the civil war in Granada, which was as a fire consuming the entrails of the enemy, and effecting more for the interests of Spain, without expense, than all the conquests of its arms.

The grand cardinal of Spain, Don Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, coincided in opinion with the Marquis of Cadiz. "Nay," added that pious prelate and politic statesman, "it would be sound wisdom to furnish the Moor with men and money, and all other necessaries to promote the civil war in Granada: by this means would be produced great benefit to the service of God, since we are assured by his infallible word, that 'a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.*' "

Ferdinand weighed these counsels in his mind, but was slow in coming to a decision. "He was religiously attentive to his own interests," observes Fray Antonio Agapida; "knowing himself to be but an instrument of Providence in this holy war, and that, therefore, in consulting his own advantage, he was promoting the interests of the faith." The opinion of Queen Isabella relieved him from his perplexity. That high-minded princess was zealous for the promotion of the faith, but not for the extermination of the infidels. The Moorish kings had held their thrones as vassals to her progenitors; she was content, at present, to accord the same privilege, and that the royal prisoner should be liberated, on condition of becoming a vassal to the crown. By this means might be effected the deliverance of many Christian captives, who were languishing in Moorish chains.

King Ferdinand adopted the magnanimous measure recommended by the queen, but he accompanied it with several shrewd conditions, exacting tribute, military services, and safe

* Salazar, Cronica del Gran Cardenal, p. 188.

passage and maintenance for Christian troops throughout the places which should adhere to Boabdil. The captive king readily submitted to these stipulations, and swore, after the manner of his faith, to observe them with exactitude. A truce was arranged for two years, during which the Castilian sovereigns engaged to maintain him on his throne, and to assist him in recovering all places which he had lost during his captivity.

When Boabdil el Chico had solemnly agreed to this arrangement in the castle of Porcuna, preparations were made to receive him in Cordova in regal style. Superb steeds, richly caparisoned, and raiment of brocade and silk, and the most costly cloths, with all other articles of sumptuous array, were furnished to him, and to fifty Moorish cavaliers, who had come to treat for his ransom, that he might appear in state befitting the monarch of Granada, and the most distinguished vassal of the Christian sovereigns. Money, also, was advanced to maintain him in suitable grandeur during his residence at the Castilian court, and his return to his dominions. Finally, it was ordered by the sovereigns, that when he came to Cordova, all the nobles and dignitaries of the court should go forth to receive him.

A question now arose among certain of those ancient and experienced men, who grow gray about a court in the profound study of forms and ceremonials; with whom a point of punctilio is as a vast political right, and who contract a sublime and awful idea of the external dignity of the throne. Certain of these court sages propounded the momentous question, whether the Moorish monarch, coming to do homage as a vassal, ought not to kneel and kiss the hand of the king. "This was immediately decided in the affirmative by a large number of ancient cavaliers, accustomed," says Antonio Agapida, "to the lofty punctilio of our most dignified court, and transcendent sovereigns." The king, therefore, was informed by those who arranged the ceremonials, that when the Moorish monarch appeared in his presence, he was expected to extend his royal hand to receive the kiss of homage.

"I should certainly do so," replied King Ferdinand, "were he at liberty, and in his own kingdom; but I certainly shall not do so, seeing that he is a prisoner, and in mine."

The courtiers loudly applauded the magnanimity of this reply, though many condemned it in secret, as savouring of

too much generosity towards an infidel; and the worthy Jesuit Fray Antonio Agapida fully concurs in their opinion.

The Moorish king entered Cordova with his little train of faithful knights, and escorted by all the nobility and chivalry of the Castilian court. He was conducted with great state and ceremony to the royal palace. When he came in presence of King Ferdinand he knelt, and offered to kiss his hand, not merely in homage as his subject, but in gratitude for his liberty. Ferdinand declined the token of vassalage, and raised him graciously from the earth. An interpreter began, in the name of Boabdil, to laud the magnanimity of the Castilian monarch, and to promise the most implicit submission. "Enough," said King Ferdinand, interrupting the interpreter in the midst of his harangue: "there is no need of these compliments. I trust in his integrity, that he will do every thing becoming a good man, and a good king." With these words, he received Boabdil el Chico into his royal friendship and protection.

CHAPTER XXI.

In the month of August, a noble Moor, of the race of the Abencerrages, arrived with a splendid retinue at the city of Cordova, bringing with him the son of Boabdil el Chico, and other of the noble youths of Granada, as hostages for the fulfilment of the terms of ransom. When the Moorish king beheld his son, his only child, who was to remain in his stead, a sort of captive in a hostile land, he folded him in his arms, and wept over him. "Wo the day that I was born!" exclaimed he; "and evil the star that presided at my birth! well was I called El Zogoybi, or, 'the unlucky;' for sorrow is heaped upon me by my father, and sorrow do I transmit to my son!"

The afflicted heart of Boabdil, however, was soothed by the kindness of the Christian sovereigns, who received the hostage prince with a tenderness suited to his age, and a distinction worthy of his rank.

They delivered him in charge to the worthy alcayde Martin de Alarcon, who had treated his father with such courtesy, during his confinement in the castle of Porcuna; giving orders, that, after the departure of the latter, his son should

be entertained with great honour and princely attention in the same fortress.

On the 2nd of September, a guard of honour assembled at the gate of the mansion of Boabdil, to escort him to the frontiers of his kingdom. He pressed his child to his heart at parting; but he uttered not a word, for there were many Christian eyes to behold his emotion. He mounted his steed, and never turned his head to look again upon the youth; but those who were near him observed the vehement struggle that shook his frame, wherein the anguish of the father had well nigh subdued the studied equanimity of the king.

Boabdil el Chico and King Ferdinand sallied forth, side by side, from Cordova, amidst the acclamations of a prodigious multitude. When they were a short distance from the city, they separated, with many gracious expressions on the part of the Castilian monarch, and many thankful acknowledgments from his late captive, whose heart had been humbled by adversity. Ferdinand departed for Guadalupe, and Boabdil for Granada. The latter was accompanied by a guard of honour; and the viceroys of Andalusia, and the generals on the frontier, were ordered to furnish him with escorts, and to show him all possible honour on his journey. In this way, he was conducted, in royal state, through the country he had entered to ravage, and was placed in safety in his own dominions.

He was met, on the frontier, by the principal nobles and cavaliers of his court, who had been secretly sent by his mother, the sultana Ayxa, to escort him to the capital.

The heart of Boabdil was lifted up for a moment, when he found himself in his own territories, surrounded by Moslem knights, with his own standards waving over his head; and he began to doubt the predictions of astrologers. He soon found cause, however, to moderate his exultation. The loyal train, which had come to welcome him, was but scanty in number; and he missed many of his most zealous and obsequious courtiers. He had returned, indeed, to his kingdom; but it was no longer the devoted kingdom he had left. The story of his vassalage to the Christian sovereigns had been made use of by his father to ruin him with his people. He had been represented as a traitor to his country, a renegado to his faith, and as leagued with the enemies of both, to subdue the Moslems of Spain to the yoke of Christian

bondage. In this way the mind of the public had been turned from him. The greater part of the nobility had thronged round the throne of his father in the Alhambra; and his mother, the resolute sultana Ayxa, with difficulty maintained her faction in the opposite towers of the alcazaba.

Such was the melancholy picture of affairs given to Boabdil by the courtiers who had come forth to meet him. They even informed him, that it would be an enterprise of difficulty and danger to make his way back to the capital, and regain the little court which still remained faithful to him in the heart of the city. The old tiger, Muley Aben Hassan, lay couched within the Alhambra, and the walls and gates of the city were strongly guarded by his troops. Boabdil shook his head at these tidings. He called to mind the ill omen of his breaking his lance against the gate of Elvira, when issuing forth so vain-gloriously with his army, which he now saw clearly foreboded the destruction of that army, on which he had so confidently relied. "Henceforth," said he, "let no man have the impiety to scoff at omens."

Boabdil approached his capital by stealth, and in the night, prowling about its walls like an enemy seeking to destroy, rather than a monarch returning to his throne. At length he seized upon a postern gate of the albaycin, a part of the city which had always been in his favour. He passed rapidly through the streets, before the populace were aroused from their sleep, and reached in safety the fortress of the alcazaba. Here he was received into the embraces of his intrepid mother, and his favourite wife Morayma. The transports of the latter, on the safe return of her husband, were mingled with tears; for she thought of her father, Ali Atar, who had fallen in his cause; and of her only son, who was left a hostage in the hands of the Christians.

The heart of Boabdil, softened by his misfortunes, was moved by the changes in everything round him; but his mother called up his spirit "This," said she, "is no time for tears and fondness: a king must think of his sceptre and his throne, and not yield to softness like common men. Thou hast done well, my son, in throwing thyself resolutely into Granada: it must depend upon thyself whether thou remain here a king or a captive."

The old king, Muley Aben Hassen, had retired to his couch that night, in one of the strongest towers of the

Alhambra; but his restless anxiety kept him from repose. In the first watch of the night, he heard a shout faintly rising from the quarter of the albaycin, which is on the opposite side of the deep valley of the Darro. Shortly afterwards, horsemen came galloping up the hill that leads to the main gate of the Alhambra, spreading the alarm, that Boabdil had entered the city, and possessed himself of the alcazaba.

In the first transports of his rage, the old king would have struck the messenger to earth. He hastily summoned his councillors and commanders, exhorting them to stand by him in this critical moment; and, during the night, made every preparation to enter the albaycin, sword in hand, in the morning.

In the meantime, the sultana Ayxa had taken prompt and vigorous measures to strengthen her party. The albaycin was the part of the city filled by the lower orders. The return of Boabdil was proclaimed throughout the streets, and large sums of money were distributed among the populace. The nobles, assembled in the alcazaba, were promised honours and rewards by Boabdil, as soon as he should be firmly seated on the throne. These well-timed measures had the customary effect; and by daybreak all the motley populace of the albaycin were in arms.

A doleful day succeeded. All Granada was a scene of tumult and horror. Drums and trumpets resounded in every part; all business was interrupted; the shops were shut, the doors barricadoed. Armed bands paraded the streets; some shouting for Boabdil, and some for Muley Aben Hassan. When they encountered each other, they fought furiously, and without mercy; every public square became a scene of battle. The great mass of the lower orders were in favour of Boabdil; but it was a multitude without discipline or lofty spirit. Part of the people was regularly armed; but the greater number had sallied forth with the implements of their trade. The troops of the old king, among whom were many cavaliers of pride and valour, soon drove the populace from the squares. They fortified themselves, however, in the streets and lanes, which they barricadoed. They made fortresses of their houses, and fought desperately from the windows and the roofs; and many a warrior of the highest blood of Granada was laid low by plebeian hands, and plebeian weapons, in this civil brawl.

It was impossible that such violent convulsions should last long in the heart of a city. The people soon longed for repose, and a return to their peaceful occupations; and the cavaliers detested these conflicts with the multitude, in which there were all the horrors of war, without its laurels. By the interference of the alfaquis, an armistice was at length effected. Boabdil was persuaded, that there was no dependance upon the inconstant favour of the multitude, and was prevailed upon to quit a capital, where he could only maintain a precarious seat upon his throne, by a perpetual and bloody struggle. He fixed his court at the city of Almeria, which was entirely devoted to him: and which at that time vied with Granada in splendour and importance. This compromise of grandeur for tranquillity, however, was sorely against the counsels of his proud, spirited mother, the sultana Ayxa. Granada appeared in her eyes the only legitimate seat of dominion: and she observed, with a smile of disdain, that he was not worthy of being called a monarch, who was not master of his capital.

CHAPTER XXII.

Though Muley Aben Hassan had regained undivided sway over the city of Granada; and the alfaquis, by his command, had denounced his son Boabdil as an apostate, and as one doomed by Heaven to misfortune; still the latter had many adherents among the common people. Whenever, therefore, any act of the old monarch was displeasing to the turbulent multitude, they were prone to give him a hint of the slippery nature of his standing, by shouting out the name of Boabdil el Chico. Long experience had instructed Muley Aben Hassan in the character of the inconstant people over whom he ruled. "Allah achbar!" exclaimed he. "God is Great! but a successful inroad into the country of the unbelievers will make more converts to my cause, than a thousand texts of the Koran, expounded by ten thousand alfaquis."

At this time, King Ferdinand was absent from Andalusia on a distant expedition, with many of his troops. The moment was favourable for a foray; and Muley Aben Hassan cast about his thoughts for a leader to conduct it. Ali Atar, the terror of the border, the scourge of Andalusia, was dead: but there was another veteran general, scarce inferior to him

for predatory warfare. This was old Bexir, the gray and crafty alcayde of Malaga; and the people under his command were ripe for an expedition of the kind. The signal defeat and slaughter of the Spanish knights, in the neighbouring mountains, had filled the people of Malaga with vanity and self-conceit; they had attributed to their own valour the defeat which had been caused by the nature of the country. Many of them wore the armour, and paraded in public with the horses, of the unfortunate cavaliers slain on that occasion; which they vauntingly displayed as the trophies of their boasted victory. They had talked themselves into a contempt for the chivalry of Andalusia, and were impatient for an opportunity to overrun a country defended by such troops. This Muley Aben Hassan considered a favourable state of mind to ensure a daring inroad; and he sent orders to old Bexir, to gather together his people, and the choicest warriors of the borders, and to carry fire and sword into the very heart of Andalusia. The wary old Bexir immediately despatched his emissaries among the alcaydes of the border towns, calling upon them to assemble, with their troops, at the city of Ronda, close upon the Christian frontier.

Ronda was the most virulent nest of Moorish depredators in the whole border country. It was situated in the midst of the wild Serrania, or chain of mountains of the same name, which are uncommonly lofty, broken, and precipitous. It stood on an almost isolated rock, nearly encircled by a deep valley, or rather chasm, through which ran the beautiful river called Rio Verde. The Moors of this city were the most active, robust, and warlike of all the mountaineers; and their very children discharged the crossbow with unerring aim. They were incessantly harassing the rich plains of Andalusia: their city abounded with Christian spoils; and their deep dungeons were crowded with Christian captives, who might sigh in vain for deliverance from this impregnable fortress. Such was Ronda in the time of the Moors; and it has ever retained something of the same character, even to the present day. Its inhabitants continue to be among the boldest, fiercest, and most adventurous, of the Andalusian mountaineers; and the Serrania de Ronda is famous, as the most dangerous resort of the bandit and the contrabandista.

Hamet Zeli, surnamed El Zegri, was the commander of this belligerent city and its fierce inhabitants. He was of the

tribe of the Zegris, and one of the most proud and daring of that warlike race. Beside the inhabitants of Ronda, he had a legion of African Moors in his immediate service. They were of the tribe of the Gomeres; mercenary troops, whose hot African blood had not yet been tempered by the softer living of Spain; and whose whole business was to fight. These he kept always well armed and well appointed. The rich pasturage of the valley of Ronda produced a breed of horses, famous for strength and speed: no cavalry, therefore, was better mounted than the band of Gomeres. Rapid on the march, fierce in the attack, it would sweep down upon the Andalusian plains like a sudden blast from the mountains, and pass away as suddenly, before there was time for pursuit.

There was nothing that stirred up the spirit of the Moors of the frontiers more thoroughly than the idea of a foray. The summons of Bexir was gladly obeyed by the alcaydes of the border towns; and in a little while there was a force of fifteen hundred horse, and four thousand foot, the very pith and marrow of the surrounding country, assembled within the walls of Ronda. The people of the place anticipated with eagerness the rich spoils of Andalusia, that were soon to crowd their gates. Throughout the day, the city resounded with the noise of kettledrum and trumpet; the highmettled steeds stamped and neighed in their stalls, as if they shared the impatience for the foray; while the Christian captives sighed, as the varied din of preparation reached to their rocky dungeons, denoting that a fresh assault was preparing against their countrymen.

The infidel host sallied forth, full of spirits; anticipating an easy ravage, and abundant booty. They encouraged each other in a contempt for the prowess of the foe. Many of the warriors of Malaga, and of some of the mountain towns, had insultingly arrayed themselves in the splendid armour of the Christian knights, slain or taken prisoners in the famous massacre; and some of them rode the Andalusian steeds which had been captured on that occasion.

The wary Bexir had concerted his plans so secretly and expeditiously, that the Christian towns of Andalusia had not the least suspicion of the storm, that had gathered beyond the mountains. The vast and rocky range of the Serrania de Ronda extended like a skreen, covering all their movements from observation.

The army made its way as rapidly as the rugged nature of the mountains would permit, guided by Hamet el Zegri, the bold alcayde of Ronda, who knew every pass and defile. Not a drum, nor the clash of a cymbal, nor the blast of a trumpet, was permitted to be heard. The mass of war rolled quietly on, as the gathering cloud to the brow of the mountains, intending to burst down, like the thunderbolt, upon the plain.

Never let the most wary commander fancy himself secure from discovery; for rocks have eyes, and trees have ears, and the birds of the air have tongues, to betray the most secret enterprise. There chanced, at this time, to be six Christian scouts prowling about the savage heights of the Serrania de Ronda. They were of that kind of lawless ruffians who infest the borders of belligerent countries, ready at any time to fight for pay, or prowl for plunder. The wild mountain passes of Spain have ever abounded with loose, rambling vagabonds of the kind; soldiers in war, robbers in peace; guides, guards, smugglers, or cut-throats, according to the circumstances of the case.

"These six maranders," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "were, on this occasion, chosen instruments, sanctified by the righteousness of their cause. They were lurking among the mountains, to entrap Moorish cattle, or Moorish prisoners; both of which were equally saleable in the Christian market."

They had ascended one of the loftiest cliffs, and were look-out, like birds of prey, ready to pounce upon any thing that might offer in the valley, when they descried the Moorish army emerging from a mountain glen. They watched it in silence, as it wound below them, remarking the standards of the various towns, and the pennons of the commanders. They hovered about it, on its march, skulking from cliff to cliff, until they saw the route by which it intended to enter the Christian country. They then dispersed, each making his way, by the secret passes of the mountains, to some different alcayde, that they might spread the alarm far and wide, and each get a separate reward.

One hastened to Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero, the same valiant alcayde who had repulsed Muley Aben Hassan from the walls of Alhama, and who now commanded at Ecija, in the absence of the master of Santiago. Others roused the town of Utrera, and the places of that neighbourhood, putting them all on the alert.

Puerto Carrero was a cavalier of consummate vigour and activity. He immediately sent couriers to the alcaydes of the neighbouring fortresses, to Herman Carrello, captain of a body of the Holy Brotherhood, and to certain knights of the order of Alcantara. Puerto Carrero was the first to take the field. Knowing the hard and hungry service of these border scampers, he made every man take a hearty repast, and see that his horse was well shod, and perfectly appointed. Then, all being refreshed, and in valiant art, he sallied forth to seek the Moors. He had but a handful of men, the retainers of his household and troops of his captaincy; but they were well armed and mounted and accustomed to the sudden rouses of the border; men with whom the cry of "Arm and out! to horse and to the field!" was sufficient at any time to put them in a fever of animation.

While the northern part of Andalusia was thus on the alert, one of the scouts had hastened southward, to the city of Xeres, and given the alarm to the valiant Marquis of Cadiz. When the marquis heard that the Moor was over the border, and that the standard of Malaga was in the advance, his heart bounded with a momentary joy; for he remembered the massacre in the mountains, where his valiant brothers had been mangled before his eyes. The very authors of his calamity were now at hand, and he flattered himself that the day of vengeance had arrived.

He made a hasty levy of his retainers, and of the fighting men of Xeres, and hurried off, with three hundred horse and two hundred foot, all resolute men, and panting for revenge.

In the meantime, the veteran Bexir had accomplished his march, as he imagined, undiscovered. From the openings of the craggy defiles, he pointed out the fertile plains of Andalusia, and regaled the eyes of his soldiery with the rich country they were about to ravage. The fierce Gomeres of Ronda were flushed with joy at the sight; and even their steeds seemed to prick up their ears, and snuff the breeze, as they beheld the scenes of their frequent forays.

When they came to where the mountain defile opened into the low land, Bexir divided his force into three parts: one, composed of foot soldiers, and of such as were weakly mounted, he left to guard the pass; being too experienced a veteran not to know the importance of securing a retreat. A second body he placed in ambush, among the groves and

thickets on the banks of the river Lopera. The third, consisting of light cavalry, he sent forth to ravage the Campiña, or great plain of Utrera. Most of this latter force was composed of the fiery Gomeres of Ronda, mounted on the fleet steeds bred among the mountains. It was led by the bold alycalde Hamet el Zegri, who was ever eager to be foremost in the foray.

Little suspecting, that the country on both sides was on the alarm, and rushing from all directions to close upon them in rear, this fiery troop dashed forward, until they came within two leagues of Utrera. Here they scattered themselves about the plain, careering round the great herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep, and sweeping them into droves, to be hurried to the mountains.

While they were thus dispersed in every direction, a troop of horse, and body of foot, from Utrera, came suddenly upon them. The Moors rallied together in small parties, and endeavoured to defend themselves: but they were without a leader; for Hamet el Zegri was at a distance, having, like a hawk, made a wide circuit in pursuit of his prey. The marauders soon gave way, and fled towards the ambush on the banks of the Lopera, being hotly pursued by the men of Utrera.

When they reached the Lopera, the Moors in ambush rushed forth, with furious cries; and the fugitives, recovering courage from this reinforcement, rallied, and turned upon their pursuers. The Christians stood their ground, though greatly inferior in number. Their lances were soon broken, and they came to sharp work with sword and cimeter. The Christians fought valiantly, but were in danger of being overwhelmed. The bold Hamet had collected a handful of his scattered Gomeres; and leaving his prey, had galloped towards the scene of action. His little troop of horsemen had reached the crest of a rising ground, at no great distance, when trumpets were heard in another direction, and Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero, and his followers, came galloping into the field, and charged upon the infidels in flank.

The Moors were astounded, at finding war thus breaking upon them from various quarters of what they had expected to find an unguarded country. They fought for a short time with desperation, and resisted a vehement assault from the knights of Alcantara, and the men-at-arms of the Holy Brotherhood. At length the veteran Bexir was struck from

his horse by Puerto Carrero, and taken prisoner, and the whole force gave way and fled.* In their flight they separated, and took two roads to the mountains; thinking, by dividing their forces, to distract the enemy. The Christians were too few to separate. Puerto Carrero kept them together, pursuing one division of the enemy with great slaughter. This battle took place at the fountain of the fig tree, near to the Lopera. Six hundred Moorish cavaliers were slain, and many taken prisoners. Much spoil was collected on the field, with which the Christians returned in triumph to their homes.

The larger body of the enemy had retreated along a road, leading more to the south, by the banks of the Guadelete. When they reached that river, the sound of pursuit had died away; and they rallied, to breathe and refresh themselves on the margin of the stream. Their force was reduced to about a thousand horse and a confused multitude of foot. While they were scattered, and partly dismounted on the banks of the Gaudelete, a fresh storm of war burst upon them from an opposite direction. It was the Marquis of Cadiz, leading on his household troops, and the fighting men of Xeres. When the Christian warriors came in sight of the Moors, they were roused to fury at beholding many of them arrayed in the armour of the cavaliers who had been slain among the mountains of Malaga. Nay, some who had been in that defeat, beheld their own armour, which they had cast away in their flight, to enable themselves to climb the mountains. Exasperated at the sight, they rushed upon the foe, with the ferocity of tigers, rather than the temperate courage of cavaliers. Each man felt as if he were avenging the death of a relative, or wiping out his own disgrace. The good marquis himself beheld a powerful Moor bestriding the horse of his brother Beltran: giving a cry of rage and anguish at the sight, he rushed through the thickest of the enemy, attacked the Moor with resistless fury, and, after a short combat, hurled him breathless to the earth.

The Moors, already vanquished in spirit, could not withstand the assault of men thus madly excited. They soon gave way, and fled for the defile of the Serrania de Ronda, where the body of troops had been stationed to secure a retreat. These, seeing them come galloping wildly up the defile, with Christian banners in pursuit, and the flash of

weapons at their deadly work, thought all Andalusia was upon them, and fled, without awaiting an attack. The pursuit continued among glens and defiles; for the Christian warriors, eager for revenge, had no compassion on the foe.

When the pursuit was over, the Marquis of Cadiz and his followers reposed themselves upon the banks of the Gaudelete, where they divided the spoil. Among this were found many rich corslets, helmets, and weapons, the Moorish trophies of the defeat in the mountains of Malaga. Several were claimed by their owners, others were known to have belonged to noble cavaliers, who had been slain or taken prisoners. There were several horses also, richly caparisoned, which had pranced proudly with the unfortunate warriors, as they sallied out of Antequera upon that fatal expedition. Thus the exultation of the victors was dashed with melancholy, and many a knight was seen lamenting over the helmet or corslet of some loved companion in arms.

The good Marquis of Cadiz was resting under a tree, on the banks of the Gaudelete, when the horse, which had belonged to his slaughtered brother Beltran, was brought to him. He laid his hand upon the mane, and looked wistfully at the empty saddle. His bosom heaved with violent agitation, and his lip quivered, and was pale. "Ay de mi, mi hermano!" "Wo is me, my brother!" was all that he said, for the grief of a warrior has not many words. He looked around on the field strewed with the bodies of the enemy; and, in the bitterness of his wo, he felt consoled by the idea, that his brother had not been unrevenged.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE bold alcayde of Ronda, Hamet el Zegri, had careered wide over the campiña of Utrera, encompassing the flocks and herds, when he heard the burst of war at a distance. There were with him but a handful of his Gomeres. He saw

* "En el despojo de la batalla se vieron muchas ricas coraras e capacetas e barberas de las que se hábian perdido en el Axarquia e otras muchas armas, e algunas fueron conocidas de sus dueños que las havian dejado para fuir, e otras fueron conocidas, que eran muy señaladas de hombres principales que havian quedado muertos e cautivos, e fueron tomados muchos de los mismos cavallos con sus ricas sillas, de los que quedaron en la Axarquia, e fueron conocidos cuios eran."—Cura de los Palacios, c. 67.

the scamper and pursuit afar off, and beheld the Christian horsemen spurring madly on towards the ambuscade, on the banks of the Lopera. Hamet tossed his hand triumphantly aloft for his men to follow him. "The Christian dogs are ours!" said he, as he put spurs to his horse, to take the enemy in rear.

The little band which followed Hamet scarcely amounted to thirty horsemen. They spurred across the plain, and reached a rising ground, just as the force of Puerto Carrera had charged, with sound of trumpet, upon the flank of the party in ambush. Hamet beheld the headlong rout of the army with rage and consternation. He found the country was pouring forth its legions from every quarter, and perceived that there was no safety but in precipitate flight. But which way to fly? an army was between him and the mountain pass: all the forces of the neighbourhood were rushing to the borders, the whole route by which he had come was, by this time, occupied by the foe. He checked his steed, rose in his stirrups, and rolled a stern and thoughtful eye over the country; then, sinking into his saddle, he seemed to commune for a moment with himself. Turning quickly to his troop, he singled out a renegado Christian, a traitor to his religion and his king. "Come hither," said Hamet: "thou knowest all the secret passes of this country?" "I do," replied the renegado. "Dost thou know any circuitous route, solitary and untravelled, by which we can pass wide within these troops, and reach the Serrania?" The renegado paused: "Such a route I know, but it is full of peril; for it leads through the heart of the Christian land." "It is well," said Hamet, "the more dangerous in appearance, the less it will be suspected. Now, hearken to me. Ride by my side. Thou seest this purse of gold and this cimeter. Take us by the route thou hast mentioned, safe to the pass of the Serrania, and this purse shall be thy reward: betray us, and this cimeter shall cleave thee to the saddle bow."*

The renegado obeyed, trembling. They turned off from the direct road to the mountains, and struck southward towards Lebrixa, passing by the most solitary roads, and along those deep ramblas and ravines by which the country is intersected. It was indeed a daring course. Every now and then they heard the distant sound of trumpets, and the alarm bells

* Cura de los Palacios, ubi supra.

of towns and villages, and found that the war was still hurrying to the borders. They hid themselves in thickets, and in the dry beds of rivers, until the danger had passed by, and then resumed their course. Hamet el Zegri rode on in silence, his hand upon his cimeter, and his eye upon the renegado guide, prepared to sacrifice him on the least sign of treachery; while his band followed, gnawing their lips with rage, at having thus to skulk through a country they had come to ravage.

When night fell, they struck into more practicable roads, always keeping wide of the villages and hamlets, lest the watchdogs should betray them. In this way they passed, in deep midnight, by Arcos, crossed the Guadalete, and effected their retreat to the mountains. The day dawned as they made their way up the savage defiles. Their comrades had been hunted up these very glens by the enemy. Every now and then they came to where there had been a partial fight, or a slaughter of the fugitives: and the rocks were red with blood, and strewed with mangled bodies. The alcayde of Ronda was almost frantic with rage at seeing many of his bravest warriors, lying stiff and stark, a prey to the hawks and vultures of the mountains. Now and then some wretched Moor would crawl out of a cave or glen whither he had fled for refuge; for, in the retreat, many of the horsemen had abandoned their steeds, thrown away their armour, and clambered up the cliffs, where they could not be pursued by the Christian cavalry.

The Moorish army had sallied forth from Ronda amidst shouts and acclamations; but wailings were heard within its walls, as the alcayde and his broken band returned, without banner or trumpet, and haggard with famine and fatigue. The tidings of their disaster had preceded them, borne by the fugitives of the army. No one ventured to speak to the stern Hamet el Zegri as he entered the city, for they saw a dark cloud gathered upon his brow.

"It seemed," says the pious Antonio Agapida, "as if Heaven meted out this defeat, in exact retribution for the ills inflicted upon the Christian warriors in the heights of Malaga." It was equally signal and disastrous. Of the brilliant array of Moorish chivalry, which descended so confidently into Andalusia, not more than two hundred escaped. The choicest troops of the frontier were either taken or destroyed; the Moorish garrisons enfeebled, and many alcaydes and cavaliers

of noble lineage carried into captivity, who were afterwards obliged to redeem themselves with heavy ransoms.

This was called the battle of Lopera, and was fought on the 17th of September, 1483. Ferdinand and Isabella were at Vittoria, in Old Castile, when they received news of the victory, and the standards taken from the enemy. They celebrated the event with processions, illuminations, and other festivities. Ferdinand sent to the Marquis of Cadiz the royal raiment which he had worn on that day, and conferred on him, and all those who should inherit his title, the privilege of wearing royal robes on our Lady's day in September, in commemoration of this victory.

Queen Isabella was equally mindful of the great services of Don Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero. Beside many encomiums and favours, she sent to his wife the royal vestments and robe of brocade, which she had worn on the same day, to be worn by her, during her life, on the anniversary of that battle.*

CHAPTER XXIV.

In the midst of the bustle of warlike affairs, the worthy chronicler Fray Antonio Agapida pauses to note, with curious accuracy, the distinguished reception given to the Count de Cabra, and his nephew, the alcayde de los Donzeles, at the stately and ceremonious court of Castile, in reward for the capture of the Moorish king Boabdil.

"The court," he observes, "was held, at the time, in the ancient Moorish palace of the city of Cordova; and the ceremonials were arranged by that venerable prelate Don Pedro Gonzales de Mendoza, bishop of Toledo, and grand cardinal of Spain.

"It was on Wednesday the 14th of October," continues the precise Antonio Agapida, "that the good Count de Cabra, according to arrangement, appeared at the gate of Cordova. Here he was met by the grand cardinal, and the Duke of Villahermosa, illegitimate brother of the king, together with many of the first grandees and prelates of the kingdom. By this august train was he attended to the palace, amidst triumphant strains of martial music, and the shouts of a prodigious multitude.

* Mariana. Abarca. Zurita. Pulgar, &c.

"When the count arrived in presence of the sovereigns, who were seated in state, on a dais, or raised part of the Hall of Audience, they both arose. The king advanced exactly five steps towards the count, who knelt, and kissed his Majesty's hand; but the king would not receive him as a mere vassal, but embraced him with affectionate cordiality. The queen also advanced two steps, and received the count with a countenance full of sweetness and benignity. After he had kissed her hand, the king and queen returned to their thrones; and, cushions being brought, they desired the worthy count to be seated in their presence." This last circumstance is written in large letters, and followed by several notes of admiration, in the manuscript of the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida; who considers the extraordinary privilege of sitting in the presence of the catholic sovereigns an honour well worth fighting for.

"The good count took his seat at a short distance from the king; and near him was seated the Duke of Najera, then the Bishop of Palencia, then the Count of Aguilar, the Count Luna, and Don Gutiere de Cardenas, senior commander of Leon.

"On the side of the queen were seated the grand cardinal of Spain, the Duke of Villahermosa, the Count of Monte Rey, and the Bishops of Jaen and Cuenca, each in the order in which they are named. The Infanta Isabella was prevented, by indisposition, from attending this ceremony.

"And now festive music resounded through the sumptuous hall; and, behold, twenty ladies of the queen's retinue entered, magnificently attired; upon which twenty youthful cavaliers, very gay and galliard in their array, stepped forth; and, each taking his fair partner, they commenced a stately dance. The court, in the meantime," observes Fray Antonio Agapida, "looked on with lofty and becoming gravity.

"When the dance was concluded, the king and queen rose, to retire to supper, and dismissed the court with many gracious expressions. He was then attended, by all the grandees present, to the palace of the grand cardinal, where they partook of a sumptuous banquet.

"On the following Saturday, the alcayde de los Donzeles was received likewise with great honours; but the ceremonies were so arranged, as to be a degree less in dignity than those shown to his uncle; the latter being considered the principal

actor in this great achievement. Thus, the grand cardinal and the Duke of Villahermosa did not meet him at the gate of the city, but received him in the palace, and entertained him in conversation until summoned to the sovereigns.

"When the alcayde de los Donzeles entered the presence chamber, the king and queen rose from their chairs; but, without advancing, they embraced him graciously, and commanded him to be seated next to the count de Cabra.

"The Infanta Isabella came forth to this reception, and took her seat beside the queen. When the court were all seated, the music again sounded through the hall, and the twenty ladies came forth, as on the preceding occasion, richly attired, but in different raiment. They danced, as before; and the Infanta Isabella, taking a young Portuguese damsel for a partner, joined in the dance. When this was concluded, the king and queen dismissed the alcayde de los Donzeles with great courtesy, and the court broke up."

The worthy Fray Antonio Agapida here indulges in a long eulogy on the scrupulous discrimination of the Castilian court, in the distribution of its honours and rewards; by which means every smile, and gesture, and word, of the sovereigns had its certain value, and conveyed its equivalent of joy to the heart of the subject: "a matter well worthy the study," says he, "of all monarchs; who are too apt to distribute honours with a heedless caprice, that renders them of no avail.

"On the following Sunday, both the Count de Cabra and the alcayde de los Donzeles were invited to sup with the sovereigns. The court, that evening, was attended by the highest nobility, arrayed with that cost and splendour for which the Spanish nobility of those days was renowned.

"Before supper, there was a stately and ceremonious dance, befitting the dignity of so august a court. The king led forth the queen, in grave and graceful measure; the Count de Cabra was honoured with the hand of the Infanta Isabella; and the alcayde de los Donzeles danced with a daughter of the Marquis de Astorga.

"The dance being concluded, the royal party repaired to the supper table, which was placed on an elevated part of the saloon. Here, in full view of the court, the Count de Cabra and the alcayde de los Donzeles supped at the same table with the king, the queen, and the Infanta. The royal family were served by the Marquis of Villena. The cupbearer to

the king was his nephew, Fadrique de Toledo, son to the Duke of Alva. Don Alonzo de Estañiga had the honour of fulfilling that office for the queen, and Tello de Aguilar for the Infanta. Other cavaliers of rank and distinction waited on the count and the alcayde de los Donzeles. At one o'clock, the two distinguished guests were dismissed, with many courteous expressions, by the sovereigns.*

"Such," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "were the great honours, paid at our most exalted and ceremonious court, to these renowned cavaliers. But the gratitude of the sovereigns did not end here. A few days afterwards, they bestowed upon them large revenues for life, and others to descend to their heirs; with the privilege, for them and their descendants, to prefix the title of Don to their names. They gave them, moreover, as armorial bearings, a Moor's head crowned, with a golden chain round the neck, in a sanguine field, and twenty-two banners round the margin of the escutcheon. Their descendants, of the houses of Cabra and Cordova, continue to bear these arms at the present day, in memorial of the victory of Lucena, and the capture of Boabdil el Chico."

CHAPTER XXV.

The valiant Roderigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz, was one of the most vigilant of commanders. He kept in his pay a number of converted Moors, to serve as adalides or armed guides. These mongrel Christians were of great service in procuring information. Availing themselves of their Moorish character and tongue, they penetrated into the enemies' country, prowled about the castles and fortresses, noticed the state of the walls, the gates, and towers; the strength of their garrisons, and the vigilance or negligence of their commanders. All this they reported minutely to the marquis; who thus knew the state of every fortress upon the frontier, and when it might be attacked with advantage. Besides the various towns and cities over which he held a feudal sway, he had always an armed force about him, ready

* The account given by Fray Antonio Agapida, of this ceremonial, so characteristic of the old Spanish court, agrees in almost every particular, with an ancient manuscript, made up from the Chronicles of the curate of los Palacios, and other old Spanish writers.

for the field. A host of retainers fed in his hall, who were ready to follow him to danger, and death itself, without inquiring who, or why, they fought. The armories of his castles were supplied with helms, and cuirasses, and weapons of all kinds, ready burnished for use; and his stables were filled with hardy steeds, that could stand a mountain scamper.

The marquis was aware, that the late defeat of the Moors, on the banks of the Lopera, had weakened their whole frontier; for many of the castles and fortresses had lost their alcaydes and their choicest troops. He sent out his war hounds, therefore, upon the range, to ascertain where a successful blow might be struck; and they soon returned with word, that Zahara was weakly garrisoned, and short of provisions.

This was the very fortress which, about two years before, had been stormed by Muley Aben Hassan; and its capture had been the first blow of this eventful war. It had ever since remained a thorn in the side of Andalusia. All the Christians had been carried away captive, and no civil population had been introduced in their stead. There were no women or children in the place. It was kept up as a mere military post, commanding one of the most important passes of the mountains, and was a strong-hold of Moorish marauders. The marquis was animated by the idea of regaining this fortress for his sovereigns, and wresting from the old Moorish king this boasted trophy of his prowess.

He sent missives, therefore, to the brave Luis Fernandez Puetro Carrero, who had distinguished himself in the late victory, and to Juan Almaraz, captain of the men-at-arms of the Holy Brotherhood, informing them of his designs, and inviting them to meet him with their forces on the banks of the Guadalete.

"It was on the day," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "of the glorious apostles St. Simon and Judas, the 28th of October, in the year of grace 1483, that this chosen band of Christian soldiers assembled, suddenly and secretly, at the appointed place. Their forces, when united, amounted to six hundred horse and fifteen hundred foot. Their gathering place was at the entrance of the defile leading to Zahara. That ancient town, renowned in Moorish warfare, is situated in one of the roughest passes of the Serrania de Ronda. It

is built round the craggy cone of a hill, on the lofty summit of which is a strong castle. The country around is broken into deep barrancas or ravines, some of which approach its very walls. The place had, until recently, been considered impregnable; but," as the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida observes, "the walls of impregnablo fortresses, like the virtue of self-confident saints, have their weak points of attack."

The Marquis of Cadiz advanced with his little army in the dead of the night, marching silently up the deep and dark defiles of the mountains, and stealing up the ravines, which extended to the walls of the town. Their approach was so noiseless, that the Moorish sentinels upon the walls heard not a voice or a footfall. The marquis was accompanied by his old escalador, Ortega de Prado, who had distinguished himself at the scaling of Alhama. This hardy veteran was stationed with ten men, furnished with scaling ladders, in a cavity among the rocks, close to the walls: at a little distance seventy men were hid in a ravine, to be at hand to second him, when he should have fixed his ladders. The rest of the troops were concealed in another ravine, commanding a fair approach to the gate of the fortress. A shrewd and wary adalid, well acquainted with the place, was appointed to give signals; and was so stationed, that he could be seen by the various parties in ambush, but was hidden from the garrison.

The remainder of the night passed away in profound quiet. The Moorish sentinels could be heard tranquilly patrolling the walls, in perfect security: the day dawned, and the rising sun began to shine against the lofty peaks of the Serrania de Ronda: the sentinels looked, from their battlements, over a savage but quiet mountain country, where not a human being was stirring; they little dreamed of the mischief that lay lurking in every ravine and chasm of the rocks around them. Apprehending no danger of surprise in broad day, the greater part of the soldiers abandoned the walls and towers, and descended into the city.

By orders of the marquis, a small body of light cavalry passed along the glen, and, turning round a point of rock, showed themselves before the town; they skirted the field almost to the gates, as if by way of bravado, and to defy the garrison to a skirmish. The Moors were not slow in replying

to it. About seventy horse, and a number of foot who had guarded the walls, sallied forth impetuously, thinking to make an easy prey of these insolent marauders. The Christian horsemen fled for the ravine; the Moors pursued them down the hill, until they heard a great shouting and tumult behind them. Looking round, they beheld their town assailed, and a scaling party mounting the walls, sword in hand. Wheeling about, they galloped furiously for the gate. The Marquis of Cadiz and Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero rushed forth at the same time with their ambuscade and endeavoured to cut them off; but the Moors succeeded in throwing themselves within the walls.

While Puerto Carrero stormed at the gate, the marquis put spurs to his horse, and galloped to the support of Ortega de Prado and his scaling party. He arrived at a moment of imminent peril, when the party was assailed by fifty Moors armed with cuirasses and lances, who were on the point of thrusting them from the walls. The marquis sprang from his horse, mounted a ladder, sword in hand, followed by a number of his troops, and made a vigorous attack upon the enemy.* They were soon driven from the walls, and the gates and towers remained in possession of the Christians. The Moors defended themselves for a short time in the street; but at length took refuge in the castle, the walls of which were strong, and capable of holding out until relief should arrive. The marquis had no desire to carry on a siege, and he had not provisions sufficient for many prisoners: he granted them, therefore, favourable terms. They were permitted, on leaving their arms behind them to march out, with as much of their effects as they could carry; and it was stipulated, that they should pass over to Barbary. The marquis remained in the place, until both town and castle were put in a perfect state of defence, and strongly garrisoned.

Thus did Zahara return once more into the possession of the Christians, to the great confusion of old Muley Aben Hassan; who, having paid the penalty of his ill-timed violence, was now deprived of its vaunted fruits. The Castilian sovereigns were so gratified by this achievement of the valiant Ponce de Leon, that they authorized him, thenceforth, to entitle himself Duke of Cadiz and Marquis of Zahara. The warrior, however, was so proud of the original title,

* Cura de los Palacios, c. 68.

under which he had so often signalized himself, that he gave it the precedence, and always signed himself Marquis Duke of Cadiz. As the reader may have acquired the same predilection, we shall continue to call him by his ancient title.

CHAPTER XXVI.

In this part of his chronicle, the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida indulges in triumphant exultation over the downfall of Zahara. "Heaven sometimes speaks," says he, "through the mouths of false prophets, for the confusion of the wicked. By the fall of the fortress was the prediction of the santon of Granada in some measure fulfilled, that the ruins of Zahara should fall upon the heads of the infidels."

Our zealous chronicler scoffs at the Moorish alcayde, who lost his fortress by surprise, in broad daylight; and contrasts the vigilance of the Christian governor of Alhama, the town taken in retaliation for the storming of Zahara.

The important post of Alhama was, at this time, confided by King Ferdinand, to Don Diego Lopez de Mendoza, Count of Tendilla; a cavalier of noble blood, brother to the grand cardinal of Spain. He had been instructed by the king, not merely to maintain his post, but also to make sallies, and lay waste the surrounding country. His fortress was critically stationed. It was within seven leagues of Granada, and at no great distance from the warlike city of Loxa. It was nestled in the lap of the mountains, commanding the high road to Malaga, and a view over the extensive vega. Thus situate, in the heart of the enemy's country, surrounded by foes ready to assail him, and a rich country for him to ravage, it behoved this cavalier to be for ever on the alert. He was, in fact, an experienced veteran, a shrewd and wary officer, and a commander amazingly prompt and fertile in expedients.

On assuming the command, he found that the garrison consisted but of one thousand men, horse and foot. They were hardy troops, seasoned in rough mountain campaigning; but reckless and dissolute, as soldiers are apt to be, when accustomed to predatory warfare. They would fight hard for booty—and then gamble it heedlessly away, or squander it in licentious revelling. Alhama abounded with hawking, sharping, idle hangers on, eager to profit by the vices and follies of the garrison. The soldiers were oftener gambling and

dancing beneath the walls, than keeping watch upon the battlements; and nothing was heard, from morning till night, but the noisy contest of cards and dice, mingled with the sound of the bolero or fandango, the drowsy strumming of the guitar, and the rattling of the castanets; while often the whole was interrupted by the loud brawl, and fierce and bloody contest.

The Count of Tendilla set himself vigorously to reform these excesses. He knew that laxity of morals is generally attended by neglect of duty; and that the least breach of discipline, in the exposed situation of his fortress, might be fatal. "Here is but a handful of men," said he, "it is necessary that each man should be a hero."

He endeavoured to awaken a proper ambition in the minds of his soldiers, and to instil into them the high principles of chivalry. "A just war," he observed, "is often rendered wicked and disastrous by the manner in which it is conducted: for the righteousness of the cause is not sufficient to sanction the profligacy of the means; and the want of order and subordination among the troops may bring ruin and disgrace upon the best concerted plans." But we cannot describe the character and conduct of this renowned commander in more forcible language than that of Fray Antonio Agapida, excepting, that the pious father places, in the foreground of his virtues, his hatred of the Moors.

"The Count de Tendilla," says he, "was a mirror of Christian knighthood: watchful, abstemious, chaste, devout, and thoroughly filled with the spirit of the cause. He laboured incessantly and strenuously for the glory of the faith, and the prosperity of their most Catholic majesties; and, above all, he hated the infidels with a pure and holy hatred. This worthy cavalier discountenanced all idleness, rioting, chambering, and wantonness, among his soldiers. He kept them constantly to the exercise of arms, making them adroit in the use of their weapons and management of their steeds, and prompt for the field, at a moment's notice. He permitted no sound of lute, or harp, or song, or other loose minstrelsy, to be heard in his fortress; debauching the ear and softening the valour of the soldier: no other music was allowed but the wholesome rolling of the drums and braying of the trumpet, and such like spirit stirring instruments, as fill the mind with thoughts of iron war. All wandering

minstrels, sharping pedlars, sturdy trulls, and other camp trumpery, were ordered to pack up their baggage, and were drummed out of the gates of Alhama. In place of such rabble, he introduced a train of holy friars, to inspirit his people by exhortation, and prayer, and choral chanting; and to spur them on to fight the good fight of faith. All games of chance were prohibited, except the game of war; and this he laboured, by vigilance and vigour, to reduce to a game of certainty. Heaven smiled upon the efforts of this righteous cavalier. His men became soldiers at all points, and terrors to the Moors. The good count never set forth on a ravage without observing the rites of confession, absolution, and communion, and obliging his followers to do the same. Their banners were blessed by the holy friars whom he maintained in Alhama; and, in this way, success was secured to his arms; and he was enabled to lay waste the land of the heathen.

"The fortress of Alhama," continues Fray Antonio Agapida, "overlooked, from its lofty site, a great part of the fertile vega, watered by the Cazin and the Xenil. From this he made frequent sallies, sweeping away the flocks and herds from the pasture, the labourer from the field, and the convoy from the road; so that it was said by the Moors, that a beetle could not crawl across the vega without being seen by Count Tendilla. The peasantry, therefore, were fain to betake themselves to watch-towers and fortified hamlets, where they shut up their cattle, garnered their corn, and sheltered their wives and children. Even there they were not safe: the count would storm these rustic fortresses with fire and sword; make captives of their inhabitants; carry off the corn, the oil, the silks, and cattle; and leave the ruins blazing and smoking within the very sight of Granada.

"It was a pleasing and refreshing sight," continues the good father, "to behold the pious knight and his followers returning from one of these crusades, leaving the rich land of the infidel in smoking desolation behind them. To behold the long line of mules and asses, laden with the plunder of the Gentiles, the hosts of captive Moors, men, women, and children; droves of sturdy beeves, lowing kine, and bleating sheep; all winding up the steep acclivity to the gates of Alhama, pricked on by the Catholic soldiery. His garrison thus thrived on the fat of the land and the spoil of the infidel:

nor was he unmindful of the pious fathers, whose blessings crowned his enterprises with success; a large portion of the spoil was always dedicated to the church, and the good friars were ever ready at the gates to hail him on his return, and receive the share allotted them. Besides these allotments, he made many votive offerings, either in time of peril or on the eve of a foray; and the chapels of Alhama were resplendent with chalices, crosses, and other precious gifts, made by this Catholic cavalier."

Thus eloquently does the venerable Fray Antonio Agapida dilate in praise of the good Count de Tendilla; and other historians, of equal veracity but less unction, agree in pronouncing him one of the ablest of Spanish generals. So terrible, in fact, did he become in the land, that the Moorish peasantry could not venture a league from Granada or Loxa, to labour in the fields, without peril of being carried into captivity. The people of Granada clamoured against Muley Aben Hassen for suffering his lands to be thus outraged and insulted, and demanded to have this bold marauder shut up in his fortress. The old monarch was roused by their remonstrances. He sent forth powerful troops of horse to protect the country during the season that the husbandmen were abroad in the fields. These troops patrolled, in formidable squadrons, in the neighbourhood of Alhama, keeping strict watch upon its gates, so that it was impossible for the Christians to make a sally, without being seen and interrupted.

While Alhama was thus blockaded by a roving force of Moorish cavalry, the inhabitants were awakened, one night, by a tremendous crash that shook the fortress to its foundations. The garrison flew to arms, supposing it some assault of the enemy. The alarm proved to have been caused by the rupture of a portion of the wall, which, undermined by heavy rains, had suddenly given way, leaving a large chasm yawning towards the plain.

The Count de Tendilla was for a time in great anxiety. Should this breach be discovered by the blockading horsemen, they would arouse the country. Granada and Loxa would pour out an overwhelming force, and they would find his walls ready sapped for an assault. In this fearful emergency, the count displayed his noted talent for expedients. He ordered a quantity of linen cloth to be stretched in front

of the breach, painted in imitation of stone, and indented with battlements, so as, at a distance, to resemble the other parts of the walls. Behind this screen, he employed workmen, day and night, in repairing the fracture. No one was permitted to leave the fortress, lest information of its defenceless plight should be carried to the Moors. Light squadrons of the enemy were seen hovering about the plain, but none approached near enough to discover the deception; and thus, in the course of a few days, the wall was rebuilt stronger than before.

There was another expedient of this shrewd veteran, which greatly excites the marvel of Agapida. "It happened," he observes, "that this catholic cavalier at one time was destitute of gold and silver, wherewith to pay the wages of his troops; and the soldiers murmured greatly, seeing that they had not the means of purchasing necessaries from the people of the town. In this dilemma, what does this most sagacious commander? He takes him a number of little morsels of paper, on which he inscribes various sums, large and small, according to the nature of the case, and signs them with his own hand and name. These did he give to the soldiery, in earnest of their pay. How! you will say, are soldiers to be paid with scraps of paper? Even so, I answer, and well paid too, as I will presently make manifest: for the good count issued a proclamation, ordering the inhabitants of Alhama to take these morsels of paper for the full amount thereon inscribed, promising to redeem them, at a future time, with silver and gold, and threatening severe punishment to all who should refuse. The people, having full confidence in his words, and trusting, that he would be as willing to perform the one promise, as he certainly was able to perform the other, took these curious morsels of paper without hesitation or demur.

"Thus, by a subtle and most miraculous kind of alchymy, did this catholic cavalier turn worthless paper into precious gold, and make his late impoverished garrison abound in money."

It is but just to add, that the Count de Tendilla redeemed his promises like a loyal knight; and this miracle, as it appeared in the eyes of Fray Antonio Agapida, is the first instance on record of paper money, which has since inundated the civilized world with unbounded opulence.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE Spanish cavaliers, who had survived the memorable massacre among the mountains of Malaga, although they had repeatedly avenged the death of their companions, yet could not forget the horror and humiliation of their defeat. Nothing would satisfy them but to undertake a second expedition of the kind, to carry fire and sword throughout a wide part of the Moorish territories, and to leave all those regions which had triumphed in their disasters, a black and burning monument of their vengeance. Their wishes accorded with the policy of the king, who desired to lay waste the country, and destroy the resources, of the enemy; every assistance was therefore given, to promote and accomplish their enterprise.

In the spring of 1484, the ancient city of Antequera again resounded with arms. Numbers of the same cavaliers, who had assembled there so gaily the preceding year, again came wheeling into the gates, with their steeled and shining warriors, but with a more dark and solemn brow than on that disastrous occasion; for they had the recollection of their slaughtered friends present to their minds, whose deaths they were to avenge.

In a little while there was a chosen force of six thousand horse and twelve thousand foot assembled in Antequera, many of them the very flower of Spanish chivalry, troops of the established military and religious orders, and of the Holy Brotherhood.

Every precaution had been taken to provide this army with all things needful for its extensive and perilous inroad. Numerous surgeons accompanied it, who were to attend upon all the sick and wounded, without charge, being paid for their services by the queen. Isabella also, in her considerate humanity, provided six spacious tents, furnished with beds, and all things requisite for the wounded and infirm. These continued to be used in all great expeditions throughout the war, and were called the Queen's Hospital. The worthy father, Fray Antonio Agapida, vaunts this benignant provision of the queen, as the first introduction of a regular camp hospital in campaigning service.

Thus thoroughly prepared, the cavaliers issued forth from Antequera in splendid and terrible array, but with less exulting confidence and vaunting ostentation than on their former foray: and this was the order of the army.

Don Alonzo de Aguilar led the advance guard, accompanied by Don Diego Fernandez de Cordova, alcayde de los Donzeles, and Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero, Count of Palma, with their household troops. They were followed by Juan de Merlo, Juan de Almara, and Carlos de Biezman, of the Holy Brotherhood, with the men-at-arms of their captaincies.

The second battalion was commanded by the Marquis of Cadiz and the master of Santiago, with the cavaliers of Santiago, and the troops of the House of Ponce Leon: with these also went the senior commander of Calatrava, and the knights of that order, and various other cavaliers and their retainers.

The right wing of this second battalion was led by Gonsalvo de Cordova, afterwards renowned as grand captain of Spain: the left wing, by Diego Lopez de Avila. They were accompanied by several cavaliers, and certain captains of the Holy Brotherhood, with their men-at-arms.

The Duke of Medina Sidonia and the Count de Cabra commanded the third battalion, with the troops of their respective houses. They were accompanied by other commanders of note, with their forces.

The rear-guard was brought up by the senior commander and knights of Alcantara, followed by the Andalusian chivalry, from Xerez, Ecija, and Carmona.

Such was the army that issued forth from the gates of Antequera, on one of the most extensive *talas*, or devastating inroads, that ever laid waste the kingdom of Granada.

The army entered the Moorish territory by the way of Alora, destroying all the corn fields, vineyards and orchards, and plantations of olives, round that city. It then proceeded through the rich valleys and fertile uplands of Coin, Cazarabonela, Almexia, and Cartama, and, in ten days, all those fertile regions were a smoking and frightful desert. From hence it pursued its slow and destructive course, like the stream of lava of a volcano, through the regions of Pupiana and Alhendin, and so on to the vega of Malaga, laying waste the groves of olives and almonds, and the fields of grain, and destroying every green thing. The Moors of some of those places interceded in vain for their groves and fields, offering to deliver up their Christian captives. One part of the army blockaded the towns, while the other ravaged the surrounding country. Sometimes the Moors sallied forth desperately to defend their property, but were driven back to their gates

with slaughter; and their suburbs pillaged and burnt. It was an awful spectacle at night, to behold the volumes of black smoke, mingled with lurid flames, that rose from the burning suburbs, and the women on the walls of the town, wringing their hands, and shrieking at the desolation of their dwellings.

The destroying army, on arriving at the sea coast, found vessels lying off shore, laden with all kinds of provisions and munitions for its use, which had been sent from Seville and Xerez. It was thus enabled to continue its desolating career. Advancing to the neighbourhood of Malaga, it was bravely assailed by the Moors of that city, and there was severe skirmishing for a whole day; but while the main part of the army encountered the enemy, the rest ravaged the whole vega, and destroyed all the mills. As the object of the expedition was not to capture places, but merely to burn, ravage, and destroy, the host, satisfied with the mischief they had done in the vega, turned their backs upon Malaga, and again entered the mountains. They passed by Coin, and through the regions of Allagagna, and Gatero, and Alhamin; all which were likewise desolated. In this way did they make the circuit of that chain of rich and verdant valleys, the glory of those mountains, and the pride and delight of the Moors. For forty days did they continue on, like a consuming fire, leaving a smoking and howling waste to mark their course, until, weary with the work of destruction, and having fully sated their revenge for the massacre of the Axarquia, they returned in triumph to the meadows of Antequera.

In the month of June, King Ferdinand took command in person of this destructive army. He increased its force; and he added to its means of mischief several lombards, and other heavy artillery, intended for the battering of towns, and managed by engineers from France and Germany. With these, the Marquis of Cadiz assured the king, he would soon be able to reduce the Moorish fortresses. They were only calculated for defence against the engines anciently used in warfare. Their walls and towers were high and thin, depending on their rough and rocky situations. The stone and iron balls, thundered from the lombards, would soon tumble them in ruins upon the heads of their defenders.

The fate of Alora speedily proved the truth of this opinion. It was strongly posted on a rock, washed by a river. The

artillery soon battered down two of the towers, and a part of the wall. The Moors were thrown into consternation at the vehemence of the assault, and the effect of those tremendous engines upon their vaunted bulwarks. The roaring of the artillery, and the tumbling of the walls, terrified the women; who beset the alcayde with vociferous supplications to surrender. The place was given up on the 20th of June, on condition that the inhabitants might depart with their effects. The people of Malaga, as yet unacquainted with the power of this battering ordnance, were so incensed at those of Alora, for what they considered a tame surrender, that they would not admit them into their city.

A similar fate attended the town of Setenil, built on a lofty rock, and esteemed impregnable. Many times had it been besieged, under former Christian kings, but never had it been taken. Even now, for several days, the artillery was directed against it without effect; and many of the cavaliers murmured at the Marquis of Cadiz, for having counselled the king to attack this unconquerable place.*

On the same night that these reproaches were uttered, the marquis directed the artillery himself. He levelled the lombards at the bottom of the walls, and at the gates. In a little while, the gates were battered to pieces; a great breach was effected in the walls; and the Moors were fain to capitulate. Twenty-four Christian captives, who had been taken in the defeat of the mountains of Malaga, were rescued from the dungeons of this fortress, and hailed the Marquis of Cadiz as their deliverer.

Needless is it to mention the capture of various other places, which surrendered without waiting to be attacked. The Moors had always shown great bravery and perseverance in defending their towns; they were formidable in their sallies and skirmishes, and patient in enduring hunger and thirst when besieged: but this terrible ordnance, which demolished their walls with such ease and rapidity, overwhelmed them with confusion and dismay, and rendered vain all resistance. King Ferdinand was so struck with the effect of this artillery, that he ordered the number of lombards to be increased; and these potent engines had henceforth a great influence on the fortunes of the war.

The last operation of this year, so disastrous to the Moors,

* Cura de los Palacios.

was an inroad by King Ferdinand, in the latter part of summer, into the vega; in which he ravaged the country, burned two villages near to Granada, and destroyed the mills close to the very gates of the city.

Old Muley Aben Hassan was overwhelmed with dismay at this desolation; which, during the whole year, had been raging throughout his territories, and had now reached to the walls of his capital. His fierce spirit was broken by misfortunes and infirmity: he offered to purchase a peace, and to hold his crown as a tributary vassal. Ferdinand would listen to no propositions; the absolute conquest of Granada was the great object of the war; and he was resolved never to rest content without its complete fulfilment. Having supplied and strengthened the garrisons of the places he had taken in the heart of the Moorish territories, he enjoined their commanders to render every assistance to the younger Moorish king, in the civil war against his father. He then returned with his army to Cordova, in great triumph; closing a series of ravaging campaigns, that had filled the kingdom of Granada with grief and consternation.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DURING this year of sorrow and disaster to the Moors, the younger king Boabdil, most truly called the unfortunate, held a diminished and feeble court in the maritime city of Almeria. He retained little more than the name of king; and was supported, in even the shadow of royalty, by the countenance and treasures of the Castilian sovereigns. Still he trusted that, in the fluctuation of events, the inconstant nation might once more return to his standard, and replace him on the throne of the Alhambra.

His mother, the high spirited sultana Ayxa la Horra, endeavoured to rouse him from this passive state. "It is a feeble mind," said she, "that waits for the turn of fortune's wheel; the brave mind seizes upon it, and turns it to its purpose. Take the field, and you may drive danger before you; remain cowering at home, and it besieges you in your dwelling. By a bold enterprise, you may regain your splendid throne in Granada! by passive forbearance, you will forfeit even this miserable throne in Almeria."

Boabdil had not the force of soul to follow these courageous

counsels; and, in a little time, the evils his mother had predicted fell upon him.

Old Muley Aben Hassan was almost extinguished by age and infirmity. He had nearly lost his sight, and was completely bed-ridden. His brother, Abdalla, surnamed El Zagal, or "the valiant," the same who had assisted in the massacre of the Spanish chivalry among the mountains of Malaga, was commander in chief of the Moorish armies; and gradually took upon himself most of the cares of sovereignty. Among other things, he was particularly zealous in espousing his brother's quarrel with his son; and he prosecuted it with such vehemence, that many affirmed there was something more than fraternal sympathy at the bottom of his zeal.

The disasters and disgraces inflicted on the country by the Christians, during this year, had wounded the national feelings of the people of Almeria; and many had felt indignant, that Boabdil should remain passive at such a time; or rather, should appear to make a common cause with the enemy. His uncle Abdalla diligently fomented this feeling by his agents. The same arts were made use of that had been successful in Granada. Boabdil was secretly, but actively, denounced by the alfaquis as an apostate, leagued with the Christians against his country and his early faith. The affections of the populace and soldiery were gradually alienated from him, and a deep conspiracy concerted for his destruction. In the month of February, 1485, El Zagal suddenly appeared before Almeria, at the head of a troop of horse. The alfaquis were prepared for his arrival, and the gates were thrown open to him. He entered, with his band, and galloped to the citadel. The alcayde would have made resistance; but the garrison put him to death, and received El Zagal with acclamations. El Zagal rushed through the apartments of the alcazar, but he sought in vain for Boabdil. He found the sultana Ayxa la Horra in one of the saloons, with Ben Ahagete, a younger brother of the monarch, a valiant Abencerrage, and several attendants, who rallied round them to protect them. "Where is the traitor Boabdil?" exclaimed El Zagal. "I know no traitor more perfidious than thyself," exclaimed the intrepid sultana: "and I trust my son is in safety, to take vengeance on thy treason." The rage of El Zagal was without bounds, when he learned that his intended victim had escaped. In his fury he slew the prince, Ben Ahagete; and his followers

fell upon and massacred the Abencerrage and attendants. As to the proud sultana, she was borne away prisoner, and loaded with revilings; as having upheld her son in his rebellion, and fomented a civil war.

The unfortunate Boabdil had been apprized of his danger by a faithful soldier, just in time to make his escape. Throwing himself on one of the fleetest horses of his stables, and followed by a handful of adherents, he had galloped, in the confusion, out of the gates of Almeria. Several of the cavalry of El Zagal, who were stationed without the walls, perceived his flight, and attempted to pursue him. Their horses were jaded with travel, and he soon left them far behind. But whither was he to fly? Every fortress and castle in the kingdom was closed against him. He knew not whom among the Moors to trust; for they had been taught to detest him, as a traitor and an apostate. He had no alternative but to seek refuge among the Christians, his hereditary enemies. With a heavy heart, he turned his horse's head towards Cordova. He had to lurk, like a fugitive, through a part of his own dominions; nor did he feel himself secure until he had passed the frontier, and beheld the mountain barrier of his country towering behind him. Then it was that he became conscious of his humiliating state; a fugitive from his throne; an outcast from his nation; a king without a kingdom. He smote his breast in an agony of grief. "Evil indeed," exclaimed he, "was the day of my birth; and truly was I named El Zogoybi, the unlucky!"

He entered the gates of Cordova with downcast countenance, and with a train of only forty followers. The sovereigns were absent; but the cavaliers of Andalusia manifested that sympathy in the misfortunes of the monarch, that becomes men of lofty and chivalrous souls. They received him with great distinction, attended him with the utmost courtesy; and he was honourably entertained by the civil and military commanders of that ancient city.

In the meantime, El Zagal put a new alcayde over Almeria, to govern in the name of his brother; and, having strongly garrisoned the place, he repaired to Malaga, where an attack of the Christians was apprehended. The young monarch being driven out of the land, and the old monarch blind and bed-ridden, El Zagal, at the head of the armies, was virtually the sovereign of Granada. The people were

pleased with having a new idol to look up to, and a new name to shout forth; and El Zagal was hailed with acclamations, as the main hope of the nation.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE great effect of the battering ordnance, in demolishing the Moorish fortresses, in the preceding year, induced King Ferdinand to procure a powerful train for the campaign of 1485; in the course of which he resolved to assault some of the most formidable holds of the enemy. An army of nine thousand cavalry and twenty thousand infantry assembled at Cordova early in the spring; and the king took the field on the 5th of April. It had been determined in secret council, to attack the city of Malaga, that ancient and important seaport, on which Granada depended for foreign aid and supplies. It was thought proper previously, however, to get possession of various towns and fortresses in the valleys of Santa Maria and Cartama, through which pass the roads to Malaga.

The first place assailed was the town of Benamaquex. It had submitted to the Catholic sovereigns in the preceding year, but had since renounced its allegiance. King Ferdinand was enraged at the rebellion of the inhabitants. "I will make their punishment," said he, "a terror to others; they shall be loyal through force, if not through faith." The place was carried by storm; one hundred and eight of the principal inhabitants were either put to the sword or hanged on the battlements. The rest were carried into captivity.*

The towns of Coin and Cartama were besieged on the same day; the first by a division of the army led on by the Marquis of Cadiz; the second by another division, commanded by Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero, the brave senior of Palma. The king, with the rest of the army, remained posted between the two places, to render assistance to either division. The batteries opened upon both places at the same time; and the thunder of the lombards was mutually heard from one camp to the other. The Moors made frequent sallies, and a valiant defence; but they were confounded by the tremendous uproar of the batteries, and the destruction of their walls. In the mean-

* Pulgar. Garibay. Cura de los Palacios.

time, the alarm fires gathered together the Moorish mountaineers of the Serrania, who assembled in great numbers in the city of Monda, about a league from Coin.

They made several attempts to enter the besieged town, but in vain; they were each time intercepted and driven back by the Christians, and were reduced to gaze at a distance, in despair, on the destruction of the place. While thus situated, there rode one day into Monda a fierce and haughty Moorish chieftain, at the head of a band of swarthy African horsemen: it was Hamet el Zegri, the fiery spirited alcayde of Ronda, at the head of his band of Gomeres. He had not yet recovered from the rage and mortification of his defeat on the banks of the Lopera, in the disastrous foray of Old Bexir, when he had been obliged to steal back to his mountains, with the loss of his bravest followers. He had ever since panted for revenge. He now rode among the host of warriors assembled at Monda. "Who among you," cried he, "feels pity for the women and children of Coin, exposed to captivity and death? Whoever he is, let him follow me, who am ready to die as a Moslem for the relief of Moslems!" So saying, he seized a white banner, and, waving it over his head, rode forth from the town, followed by the Gomeres. Many of the warriors, roused by his words and his example, spurred resolutely after his banner. The people of Coin, being prepared for this attempt, sallied forth as they saw the white banner, and made an attack upon the Christian camp; and, in the confusion of the moment, Hamet and his followers galloped into the gates. This reinforcement animated the besieged, and Hamet exhorted them to hold out obstinately in defence of life and the town. As the Gomeres were veteran warriors, the more they were attacked, the harder they fought.

At length, a great breach was made in the walls; and Ferdinand, who was impatient of the resistance of the place, ordered the Duke of Naxera and the Count of Benavente to enter with their troops; and, as their forces were not sufficient, he sent word to Luis de Cerda, Duke of Medina Celi, to send a part of his people to their assistance.

The feudal pride of the duke was roused at this demand. "Tell my lord the king," said the haughty grandee, "that I have come to succour him with my household troops. If my people are ordered to any place, I am to go with them; but, if

I am to remain in the camp, they must remain with me: for troops cannot serve without their commander, nor their commander without his troops."

The reply of the high-spirited grandee perplexed the cautious Ferdinand, who knew the jealous pride of his powerful nobles. In the meantime, the people of the camp, having made all preparations for the assault, were impatient to be led forward. Upon this Pero Ruyz de Alarcon put himself at their head, and, seizing their mantas, or portable bulwarks, and their other defences, they made a gallant assault, and fought their way in at the breach. The Moors were so overcome by the fury of their assault, that they retreated fighting to the square of the town. Pero Ruyz de Alarcon thought the place was carried, when suddenly Hamet and his Gomeres came scouring through the streets, with wild war cries, and fell furiously upon the Christians. The latter were, in their turn, beaten back; and, while attacked in front by the Gomeres, were assailed by the inhabitants with all kinds of missiles, from their roofs and windows. They at length gave way, and retreated through the breach. Pero Ruyz de Alarcon still maintained his ground in one of the principal streets. The few cavaliers that stood by him urged him to fly! "No," said he, "I came here to fight, and not to fly!" He was presently surrounded by the Gomeres. His companions fled for their lives. Before they fled, they saw him covered with wounds, but still fighting desperately for the fame of a good cavalier.*

The resistance of the inhabitants, though aided by the valour of the Gomeres, was of no avail. The battering artillery of the Christians demolished their walls; combustibles were thrown into their town, which set it on fire in various places, and they were at length compelled to capitulate. They were permitted to depart with their effects, and the Gomeres with their arms. Hamet el Zegri and his African band sallied forth, and rode proudly through the Christian camp; nor could the Spanish cavaliers refrain from regarding with admiration that haughty warrior, and his devoted and dauntless adherents.

The capture of Coin was accompanied by that of Cartama. The fortifications of the latter were repaired and garrisoned; but Coin being too extensive to be defended by a moderate force, its walls were demolished. The siege of these places

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 42.

struck such terror into the surrounding country, that the Moors of many of the neighbouring towns abandoned their homes, and fled, with such of their effects as they could carry away; upon which the king gave orders to demolish their walls and towers.

King Ferdinand now left his camp and his heavy artillery near Cartama, and proceeded with his lighter troops to reconnoitre Malaga. By this time the secret plan of attack, arranged in the council of war at Cordova, was known to all the world. The vigilant warrior, El Zagal, had thrown himself into the place. He had put all the fortifications, which were of vast strength, into a state of defence, and had sent orders to the alcaydes of the mountain towns to hasten with their forces to his assistance.

The very day that Ferdinand appeared before the place, El Zagal sallied forth to receive him, at the head of a thousand cavalry, the choicest warriors of Granada. A hot skirmish took place among the gardens and olive trees near the city. Many were killed on both sides, and this gave the Christians a sharp foretaste of what they might expect, if they attempted to besiege the place.

When the skirmish was over, the Marquis of Cadiz had a private conference with the king. He represented the difficulty of besieging Malaga with their present force, especially as their plans had been discovered and anticipated, and the whole country was marching over the mountains to oppose them. The marquis, who had secret intelligence from all quarters, had received a letter from Juceph Xerife, a Moor of Ronda, of Christian lineage, apprizing him of the situation of that important place and its garrison, which at that moment laid it open to attack; and the marquis was urgent with the king to seize upon this critical moment, and secure a place, which was one of the most powerful Moorish fortresses on the frontiers, and, in the hands of Hamet el Zegri, had been the scourge of Andalusia. The good marquis had another motive for his advice, becoming a true and loyal knight. In the deep dungeons of Ronda languished several of his companions in arms, who had been captured in the defeat in the Axarquia. To break their chains, and restore them to liberty and light, he felt to be his peculiar duty, as one of those who had most promoted that disastrous enterprise.

King Ferdinand listened to the advice of the marquis. He

knew the importance of Ronda, which was considered one of the keys of the kingdom of Granada; and he was disposed to punish the inhabitants, for the aid they had rendered to the garrison at Coin. The siege of Malaga, therefore, was abandoned for the present, and preparations made for a rapid and secret move against the city of Ronda.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE bold Hamet el Zegri, the alcayde of Ronda, had returned sullenly to his strong-hold after the surrender of Coin. He had fleshed his sword in battle with the Christians; but his thirst for vengeance was still unsatisfied. Hamet gloried in the strength of his fortress and the valour of his people. A fierce and warlike populace was at his command; his signal fires would summon all the warriors of the Serrania; his Gomeres almost subsisted on the spoils of Andalusia; and in the rock on which his fortress was built were hopeless dungeons, filled with Christian captives, who had been carried off by these war hawks of the mountains.

Ronda was considered as impregnable. It was situate in the heart of the wild and rugged mountains, and perched upon an isolated rock, crested by a strong citadel, with triple walls and towers. A deep ravine, or rather a perpendicular chasm of rocks, of frightful depth, surrounded three parts of the city; through this flowed the Rio Verde, or Green River. There were two suburbs to the city, fortified by walls and towers, and almost inaccessible, from the natural asperity of the rocks. Around this rugged city were deep rich valleys, sheltered by the mountains, refreshed by constant streams, abounding with grain, and the most delicious fruits, and yielding verdant meadows; in which was reared a renowned breed of horses, the best in the whole kingdom for a foray.

Hamet el Zegri had scarcely returned to Ronda, when he received intelligence, that the Christian army was marching to the siege of Malaga, and orders from El Zagal to send troops to his assistance. Hamet sent a part of his garrison for that purpose. In the meantime, he meditated an expedition to which he was stimulated by pride and revenge. All Andalusia was now drained of its troops: there was an opportunity, therefore, for an inroad, by which he might wipe out the disgrace of his defeat at the battle of Lopera. Apprehending no

danger to his mountain city, now that the storm of war had passed down into the vega of Malaga, he left but a remnant of his garrison to man its walls; and, putting himself at the head of his band of Gomeres, swept down suddenly into the plains of Andalusia. He careered, almost without resistance, over those vast campiñas, or pasture lands, which form a part of the domains of the Duke of Medina Sidonia. In vain the bells were rung, and the alarm fires kindled; the band of Hamet had passed by before any force could be assembled; and was only to be traced, like a hurricane, by the devastation it had made.

Hamet regained in safety the Serrania de Ronda, exulting in his successful inroad. The mountain glens were filled with long droves of cattle, and flocks of sheep, from the campiñas of Medina Sidonia. There were mules, too, laden with the plunder of the villages; and every warrior had some costly spoil of jewels for his favourite mistress.

As El Zegri drew near to Ronda, he was roused from his dream of triumph by the sound of heavy ordnance, bellowing through the mountain defiles. His heart misgave him: he put spurs to his horse, and galloped in advance of his lagging cavalgada. As he proceeded, the noise of the ordnance increased, echoing from cliff to cliff. Spurring his horse up a craggy height, which commanded an extensive view, he beheld, to his consternation, the country about Ronda white with the tents of a besieging army. The royal standard, displayed before a proud encampment, showed that Ferdinand himself was present; while the incessant blaze and thunder of artillery, and the volumes of overhanging smoke, told the work of destruction that was going on.

The royal army had succeeded in coming upon Ronda by surprise, during the absence of its alcayde, and most of its garrison; but its inhabitants were warlike, and defended themselves bravely, trusting that Hamet and his Gomeres would soon return to their assistance.

The fancied strength of their bulwarks had been of little avail against the batteries of the besiegers. In the space of four days, three towers, and great masses of the walls which defended the suburbs, were battered down, and the suburbs taken and plundered. Lombards and other heavy ordnance were now levelled at the walls of the city, and stones and missiles of all kinds hurled into the streets. The very rock on

which the city stood shook with the thunder of the artillery; and the Christian captives, deep within its dungeons, hailed the sound as the promise of deliverance.

When Hamet el Zegri beheld his city thus surrounded and assailed, he called upon his men to follow him, and make a desperate attempt to cut their way through to its relief. They proceeded stealthily through the mountains, until they came to the nearest heights above the Christian camp. When night fell, and part of the army was sunk in sleep, they descended the rocks, and rushing suddenly upon the weakest part of the camp, endeavoured to break their way through, and gain the city. The camp was too strong to be forced; they were driven back to the crags of the mountains, whence they defended themselves by showering down darts, and stones upon their pursuers.

Hamet now lighted alarm fires about the heights; his standard was joined by the neighbouring mountaineers, and by troops from Malaga. Thus reinforced, he made repeated assaults upon the Christians, cutting off all stragglers from the camp. All his attempts, however, to force his way into the city were fruitless. Many of his bravest men were slain, and he was obliged to retreat into the fastnesses of the mountains.

In the meanwhile, the distress of Ronda was hourly increasing. The Marquis of Cadiz, having possession of the suburbs, was enabled to approach to the very foot of the perpendicular precipice, rising from the river, on the summit of which the city is built. At the foot of this rock is a living fountain of limpid water, gushing into a great natural basin. A secret mine led down from within the city to this fountain, by several hundred steps, cut in the solid rock. From this the city obtained its chief supply of water; and the steps were deeply worn by the weary feet of Christian captives employed in the painful labour. The Marquis of Cadiz discovered this subterranean passage, and directed his pioneers to countermine it through the solid body of the rock. They pierced to the shaft; and, stopping it up, deprived the city of the benefit of this precious fountain.

While the brave Marquis of Cadiz was thus pressing the siege with zeal, and glowing with the generous thoughts of soon delivering his companions in arms from the Moorish dungeons, far other were the feelings of the alcayde, Hamet el Zegri.

He smote his breast, and gnashed his teeth, in impotent fury, as he beheld, from the mountain cliffs, the destruction of the city. Every thunder of the Christian ordnance seemed to batter against his heart. He saw tower after tower tumbling by day, and at night the city blazed like a volcano. "They fired not merely stones from their ordnance," says a chronicler of the times, "but likewise great balls of iron, cast in moulds, which demolished every thing they struck." They threw also balls of tow, steeped in pitch and oil and gunpowder, which, when once on fire, were not to be extinguished, and which set the houses in flames.

Great was the horror of the inhabitants. They knew not where to flee for refuge: their houses were in a blaze, or shattered by the ordnance. The streets were perilous, from the falling ruins and the bounding balls, which dashed to pieces everything they encountered. At night the city looked like a fiery furnace: the cries and wailings of the women were heard between the thunders of the ordnance, and reached even to the Moors on the opposite mountains, who answered them by yells of fury and despair.

All hope of external succour being at an end, the inhabitants of Ronda were compelled to capitulate. Ferdinand was easily prevailed upon to grant them favourable terms. The place was capable of longer resistance; and he feared for the safety of his camp, as the forces were daily augmenting on the mountains, and making frequent assaults. The inhabitants were permitted to depart with their effects, either to Barbary or elsewhere; and those who chose to reside in Spain had lands assigned them, and were indulged in the exercise of their religion.

No sooner did the place surrender, than detachments were sent to attack the Moors, who hovered about the neighbouring mountains. Hamet el Zegri, however, did not remain, to try a fruitless battle. He gave up the game as lost, and retreated with his Gomeres, filled with grief and rage, but trusting to fortune to give him future vengeance.

The first care of the good Marquis of Cadiz, on entering Ronda, was to deliver his unfortunate companions in arms from the dungeons of the fortress. What a difference in their looks, from the time, when, flushed with health and hope, and arrayed in military pomp, they had sallied forth upon the mountain foray. Many of them were almost naked, with

irons at their ankles, and beards reaching to their waists. Their meeting with the marquis was joyful, yet it had the look of grief; for their joy was mingled with many bitter recollections. There was an immense number of other captives, among whom were several young men of noble families, who, with filial piety, had surrendered themselves prisoners in place of their fathers.

The captives were all provided with mules, and sent to the queen at Cordova. The humane heart of Isabella melted at the sight of the piteous cavalcade. They were all supplied by her with food and raiment, and money to pay their expenses to their homes. Their chains were hung as pious trophies against the exterior of the church of St. Juan de los Reyes in Toledo, where the Christian traveller may regale his eyes with the sight of them at this very day.

Among the Moorish captives was a young infidel maiden of great beauty, who desired to become a Christian, and to remain in Spain. She had been inspired with the light of the true faith, through the ministry of a young man, who had been a captive in Ronda. He was anxious to complete his good work by marrying her. The queen consented to their pious wishes, having first taken care, that the young maiden should be properly purified by the holy sacrament of baptism.

"Thus this pestilent nest of warfare and infidelity, the city of Ronda," says the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida, "was converted to the true faith by the thunder of our artillery. An example which was soon followed by Casanbonelas, Alabella, and other towns in these parts; insomuch that, in the course of this expedition, no less than seventy-two places were rescued from the vile sect of Mahomet, and placed under the benignant domination of the cross."

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE people of Granada were a versatile, unsteady race, and exceedingly given to make and unmake kings. They had, for a long time, vacillated between old Muley Aben Hassen and his son, Boabdil el Chico; sometimes setting up the one, sometimes the other, and sometimes both at once, according to the pinch and pressure of external evils. They found, however, that the evils still went on increasing, in defiance of every change; and were at their wits' end to

devise some new combination or arrangement, by which an efficient government might be wrought out of two bad kings.

When the tidings arrived of the fall of Ronda, and the consequent ruin of the frontier, a tumultuous assemblage took place in one of the public squares. As usual, the people attributed the misfortunes of the country exclusively to the faults of their rulers: for the populace never imagine, that any part of their miseries can originate with themselves. A crafty alfaqui, named Alyme Mazer, who had watched the current of their discontents, rose, and harangued them.

"You have been choosing and changing," said he, "between two monarchs; and who and what are they. Muley Aben Hassan for one; a man worn out by age and infirmities; unable to sally forth against the foe, even when ravaging to the very gates of the city: and Boabdil el Chico for the other; an apostate, a traitor, a deserter from his throne, a fugitive among the enemies of his nation; a man fated to misfortune, and proverbially named 'the unlucky.'

"In a time of overwhelming war, like the present, he only is fit to sway a sceptre, who can wield a sword. Would you seek such a man? You need not look far. Allah has sent such a one, in this time of distress, to retrieve the fortunes of Granada. You already know whom I mean. You know it can be no other than your general, the invincible Abdalla; whose surname of El Zagal has become a watchword in battle, rousing the courage of the faithful, and striking terror into the unbelievers."

The multitude received the words of the alfaqui with acclamations; they were delighted with the idea of a third king over Granada; and Abdalla el Zagal, being of the royal family, and already in the virtual exercise of royal power, the measure had nothing in it that appeared either rash or violent. A deputation was therefore sent to El Zagal at Malaga, inviting him to repair to Granada, to receive the crown.

El Zagal expressed great surprise and repugnance, when the mission was announced to him; and nothing but his patriotic zeal for the public safety, and his fraternal eagerness to relieve the aged Aben Hassan from the cares of government, prevailed upon him to accept the offer of the crown. Leaving, therefore, Rodovan de Vanegas, one of the bravest Moorish generals, in command of Malaga, he departed for Granada, attended by three hundred trusty cavaliers.

Old Muley Aben Hassen did not wait for the arrival of his brother. Unable any longer to buffet with the storms of the times, his only solicitude was to seek some safe and quiet harbour of repose. In one of the deep valleys which indent the Mediterranean coast, and which are shut up, on the land side, by stupendous mountains, stood the little city of Almunecar. The valley was watered by the river Frio, and abounded with fruits, with grain, and with pasturage. The city was strongly fortified; and the garrison and alcayde were devoted to the old monarch. This was the place chosen by Muley Aben Hassan for his asylum. His first care was to send thither all his treasures; his next, to take refuge there himself; his third, that his sultana Zorayna, and their two sons, should follow him.

In the meantime, Muley Abdalla el Zagal pursued his journey towards the capital, attended by his three hundred cavaliers. The road from Malaga to Granada winds close by Alhama, and is commanded by that fortress. This had been a most perilous pass for the Moors during the time that Alhama was commanded by the Count de Tendilla. Not a traveller could escape his eagle eye; and his garrison was ever ready for a sally. The Count de Tendilla, however, had been relieved from this arduous post, and it had been given in charge to Don Gutiere de Padilla, clavero, or treasurer of the order of Calatrava, an easy, indulgent man, who had with him three hundred gallant knights of his order, beside other mercenary troops. The garrison had fallen off in discipline; the cavaliers were hardy in fight and daring in foray, but confident in themselves, and negligent of proper precautions. Just before the journey of El Zagal, a number of these cavaliers, with several soldiers of fortune of the garrison, in all one hundred and seventy men, had sallied forth to harass the Moorish country during its present distracted state; and having ravaged the valleys of the Sierra Nevada, or snowy mountains, were returning to Alhama in gay spirits, and laden with booty.

As El Zagal passed through the neighbourhood of Alhama, he recollected the ancient perils of the road, and sent light corredors in advance, to inspect each rock and ravine where a foe might lurk in ambush. One of these scouts, overlooking a narrow valley, which opened upon the road, descried a troop of horsemen on the banks of a little stream. They were dis-

mounted, and had taken the bridles from their steeds, that that they might crop the fresh grass on the banks of the river. The horsemen were scattered about, some reposing in the shade of rocks and trees, others gambling for the spoil they had taken. Not a sentinel was posted to keep guard; everything showed the perfect security of men who consider themselves beyond the reach of danger.

These careless cavaliers were, in fact, the knights of Calatrava, with a part of their companions in arms, returning from their foray. A part of their force had passed on with the cavalgada; ninety of the principal cavaliers had halted, to repose and refresh themselves in this valley. El Zagal smiled with ferocious joy when he heard of their negligent security. "Here will be trophies," said he, "to grace our entrance into Alhambra." Approaching the valley with cautious silence, he wheeled into it at full speed at the head of his troop, and attacked the Christians so suddenly and furiously that they had not time to put the bridles upon their horses, or even to leap into the saddles. They made a confused but valiant defence, fighting among the rocks, and in the rugged bed of the river. Their defence was useless; seventy-nine were slain, the remaining eleven were taken prisoners.

A party of the Moors galloped in pursuit of the cavalgada; they soon overtook it, winding slowly up a hill. The horsemen who convoyed it, perceiving the enemy at a distance, made their escape, and left the spoil to be retaken by the Moors.

El Zagal gathered together his captives and his booty, and proceeded, elate with success, to Granada. He paused before the gate of Elvira, for as yet he had not been proclaimed king. This ceremony was immediately performed; for the fame of his recent exploit had preceded him, and had intoxicated the minds of the giddy populace.

He entered Granada in a sort of triumph. The eleven captive knights of Calatrava walked in front. Next were paraded the ninety captured steeds, bearing the armour and weapons of their late owners, and mounted by as many Moors. Then came seventy Moorish horsemen, with as many Christian heads hanging at their saddle-bows. Muley Abdalla el Zagal followed, surrounded by a number of distinguished cavaliers, richly attired; and the pageant was closed by a long caval-

gada of the flocks and herds, and other booty, recovered from the Christians.*

The populace gazed with almost savage triumph at these captive cavaliers and the gory heads of their companions, knowing them to have been a part of the formidable garrison of Alhama, so long the scourge of Granada and the terror of the vega. They hailed this petty triumph as an auspicious opening of the reign of their new monarch. For several days the names of Muley Aben Hassan and Boabdil el Chico were never mentioned but with contempt, and the whole city resounded with the praises of El Zagal, or "the valiant."

CHAPTER XXXII.

The elevation of a bold and active veteran to the throne of Granada, in place of its late bedridden king, made a vast difference in the aspect of the war, and called for some blow that should dash the confidence of the Moors in their new monarch, and animate the Christians to fresh exertions.

Don Diego de Cordova, the brave Count de Cabra, was at this time in his castle of Vaena, where he kept a wary eye upon the frontier. It was now the latter part of August; and he grieved that the summer should pass away without any inroad into the country of the foe. He sent out his scouts on the prowl, and they brought him word that the important post of Moclin was but weakly garrisoned. This was a castellated town, strongly situate upon a high mountain, partly surrounded by thick forests, and partly girdled by a river. It defended one of the rugged and solitary passes by which the Christians were wont to make their inroads, insomuch that the Moors, in their figurative way, denominated it the shield of Granada.

The Count de Cabra sent word to the monarchs of the feeble state of the garrison, and gave it as his opinion that by a secret and rapid expedition the place might be surprised. King Ferdinand asked the advice of his counsellors. Some cautioned him against the sanguine temperament of the Count and his heedlessness of danger. Moclin, they observed, was near to Granada, and might be promptly reinforced. The opinion of the count, however, prevailed; the king, con-

* Zurita, lib. xx. c. 62. Mariana, Hist. España. Arbaca, Annales de Aragon.

sidering him almost infallible in matters of border warfare since his capture of Boabdil el Chico.

The king departed from Cordova, therefore, and took post at Alcala la Real, for the purpose of being near to Moclin. The queen also proceeded to Vaena, accompanied by her children, Prince Juan and the Princess Isabella, and her great counsellor in all matters, public and private, spiritual and temporal, the venerable Grand Cardinal of Spain.

Nothing could exceed the pride and satisfaction of the loyal Count de Cabra when he saw this stately train winding along the dreary mountain roads, and entering the gates of Vaena. He received his royal guests with all due ceremony, and lodged them in the best apartments that the warrior castle afforded, being the same that had formerly been occupied by the royal captive Boabdil.

King Ferdinand had concerted a wary plan to ensure the success of the enterprise. The Count de Cabra and Don Martin Alonzo de Montemayor were to set forth with their troops, so as to reach Moclin by a certain hour, and to intercept all who should attempt to enter, or should sally from, the town. The master of Calatrava, the troops of the Grand Cardinal, commanded by the Count of Buendia, and the forces of the Bishop of Jaen, led by that belligerent prelate, amounting in all to four thousand horse and six thousand foot, were to set off in time to co-operate with the Count de Cabra, so as to surround the town. The king was to follow with his whole force, and encamp before the place.

And here the worthy Padre Fray Antonio Agapida breaks forth into a triumphant eulogy of the pious prelates who thus mingled personally in these scenes of warfare. "As this was a holy crusade," says he, "undertaken for the advancement of the faith and the glory of the church, so was it always countenanced and upheld by saintly men. For the victories of their most Catholic majesties were not followed, like those of more worldly sovereigns, by erecting castles and towers, and appointing alcaydes and garrisons, but by founding of convents and cathedrals, and the establishment of wealthy bishoprics. Wherefore their majesties were always srrrounded, in court or camp, in the cabinet or in the field, by a crowd of ghostly advisers, inspiriting them to the prosecution of this most righteous war. Nay, the holy men of the church did not scruple, at times, to buckle

on the cuirass over the cassock, to exchange the crosier for the lance; and thus, with corporal hands, and temporal weapons, to fight the good fight of the faith."

But to return from this rhapsody of the worthy friar. The Count de Cabra, being instructed in the complicated arrangements of the king, marched forth at midnight, to execute them punctually. He led his troops by the little river, which winds below Vaena, and so up the wild defiles of the mountains; marching all night, and stopping only in the heat of the following day, to repose under the shadowy cliffs of a deep barranca, calculating to arrive at Moclin exactly in time to co-operate with the other forces.

The troops had scarcely stretched themselves on the earth to take repose, when a scout arrived, bringing word that El Zagal had suddenly sallied out of Granada, with a strong force, and had encamped in the vicinity of Moclin. It was plain that the wary Moor had received information of the intended attack. This, however, was not the idea that presented itself to the mind of the Count de Cabra. He had captured one king; here was a fair opportunity to secure another. What a triumph to lodge a second captive monarch in his castle of Vaena! What a prisoner to deliver into the hands of his royal mistress! Fired with the thought, the good count forgot all the arrangements of the king; or, rather, blinded by former success, he trusted everything to courage and fortune, and thought that, by one bold swoop, he might again bear off the royal prize, and wear his laurels without competition. His only fear was that the master of Calatrava, and the belligerent bishop, might come up in time to share the glory of the victory. So ordering every one to horse, this hot-spirited cavalier pushed on for Moclin, without allowing his troops the necessary time for repose.*

The evening closed as the count arrived in the neighbourhood of Moclin. It was the full of the moon, and a bright and cloudless night. The count was marching through one of those deep valleys or ravines, worn in the Spanish mountains by the brief but tremendous torrents, which prevail during the autumnal rains. It was walled, on both sides, by lofty and almost perpendicular cliffs; but the strong gleams of moonlight, that penetrated to the bottom of the glen, glittered on the armour of the squadrons, as they silently

* Mariana, lib. xxv. c. 17. Abarca. Zurita, &c.

passed through it. Suddenly the war-cry of the Moors rose in various parts of the valley. "El Zagal! El Zagal!" was shouted from every cliff, accompanied by showers of missiles, that struck down several of the Christian warriors. The count lifted up his eyes, and beheld, by the light that prevailed, every cliff glistening with Moorish soldiery. The deadly shower fell thickly around him; and the shining armour of his followers made them fair objects for the aim of the enemy. The count saw his brother Gonzalo struck dead by his side; his own horse sunk under him, pierced by four Moorish lances; and he received a wound in the hand from an arquebuse. He remembered the horrible massacre of the mountains of Malaga, and feared a similar catastrophe. There was no time to pause. His brother's horse, freed from his slaughtered rider, was running at large; seizing the reins, he sprang into the saddle, called upon his men to follow him, and, wheeling round, retreated out of the fatal valley.

The Moors, rushing down from the heights, pursued the retreating Christians. The chase endured for a league; but it was a league of rough and broken ground, where the Christians had to turn and fight at almost every step. In these short but fierce combats, the enemy lost many cavaliers of note; but the loss of the Christians was infinitely more grievous, comprising numbers of the noblest warriors of Vaena and its vicinity. Many of the Christians, disabled by wounds, or exhausted by fatigue, turned aside, and endeavoured to conceal themselves among rocks and thickets, but never more rejoined their companions; being slain or captured by the Moors, or perishing in their wretched retreats.

The arrival of the troops, led by the master of Calatrava and the Bishop of Jaen, put an end to the rout. El Zagal contented himself with the laurels he had gained; and, ordering the trumpets to call off his men from the pursuit, returned in great triumph to Moclin.*

Queen Isabella was at Vaena, awaiting in great anxiety, the result of the expedition. She was in a stately apartment of the castle, looking towards the road that winds through the mountains from Moclin, and regarding the watchtowers that crowned the neighbouring heights, in hopes of favourable signals. The Prince and Princess, her children, were with her, and her venerable councillor, the grand cardinal.

* Zurita, lib. xx. c. 4. Pulgar, Cronica.

All shared in the anxiety of the moment. At length couriers were seen riding toward the town. They entered its gates; but, before they reached the castle, the nature of their tidings was known to the queen, by the shrieks and wailings that rose from the streets below. The messengers were soon followed by wounded fugitives, hastening home to be relieved, or to die among their friends and families. The whole town resounded with lamentations, for it had lost the flower of its youth, and its bravest warriors. Isabella was a woman of courageous soul, but her feelings were overpowered by the spectacle of woe which presented itself on every side. Her maternal heart mourned over the death of so many loyal subjects, who, so shortly before, had rallied round her with devoted affection; and, losing her usual self-command, she sunk into deep despondency.

In this gloomy state of mind, a thousand apprehensions crowded upon her. She dreaded the confidence which this success would impart to the Moors. She feared, also, for the important fortress of Alhama, the garrison of which had not been reinforced since its foraging party had been cut off by this same El Zagal. On every side the queen saw danger and disaster, and feared that a general rout was about to attend the Castilian arms.

The grand cardinal comforted her with both spiritual and worldly counsel. He told her to recollect, that no country was ever conquered, without occasional reverses to the conquerors; that the Moors were a warlike people, fortified in a rough and mountainous country, where they never could be conquered by her ancestors; and that, in fact, her armies had already, in three years, taken more cities than those of any of her predecessors had been able to do in twelve. He concluded by offering to take the field, with three thousand cavalry, his own retainers, paid and maintained by himself, and either hasten to the relief of Alhama, or undertake any other expedition her majesty might command. The discreet words of the cardinal soothed the spirit of the queen, who always looked to him for consolation, and she soon recovered her usual equanimity.

Some of the counsellors of Isabella, of that politic class who seek to rise by the faults of others, were loud in their censures of the rashness of the count. The queen defended him with prompt generosity. "The enterprise," said she,

"was rash; but not more rash than that of Lucena, which was crowned with success, and which we have all applauded, as the height of heroism. Had the Count de Cabra succeeded in capturing the uncle, as he did the nephew, who is there that would not have praised him to the skies?"

The magnanimous words of the queen put a stop to all invidious remarks in her presence; but certain of the courtiers, who had envied the count the glory gained by his former achievements, continued to magnify, among themselves, his present imprudence: and we are told by Fray Antonio Agapida, that they sneeringly gave the worthy cavalier the appellation of "Count de Cabra, the king-catcher."

Ferdinand had reached the place on the frontier called the Fountain of the King, within three leagues of Moclin, when he heard of the late disaster. He greatly lamented the precipitation of the count, but forbore to express himself with severity; for he knew the value of that loyal and valiant cavalier.* He held a council of war, to determine what course was to be pursued. Some of his cavaliers advised him to abandon the attempt upon Moclin, the place being strongly reinforced, and the enemy inspirited by his recent victory. Certain old Spanish hidalgos reminded him, that he had but a few Castilian troops in his army, without which stanch soldiery his predecessors never presumed to enter the Moorish territory; while others remonstrated, that it would be beneath the dignity of the king to retire from an enterprise on account of the defeat of a single cavalier and his retainers. In this way the king was distracted by a multitude of counsellors; when fortunately a letter from the queen put an end to his perplexities. Proceed we in the next chapter, to relate what was the purport of that letter.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"HAPPY are these princes," exclaims the worthy Padre Fray Antonio Agapida, "who have women and priests to advise them; for in these dwelleth the spirit of council!" While Ferdinand and his captains were confounding each other in their deliberations at the Fountain of the King, a

* Abarca, Anales de Aragon.

quiet but deep little council of war was held, in the state apartment of the old castle of Vaena, between Queen Isabella, the venerable Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, grand cardinal of Spain, and Don Garcia Osorio, the belligerent bishop of Jaen. This last worthy prelate, who had exchanged his mitre for a helm, no sooner beheld the defeat of the enterprise against Moclin, than he turned the reins of his sleek, stall-fed steed, and hastened back to Vaena, full of a project for the employment of the army, the advancement of the faith, and the benefit of his own diocese. He knew, that the actions of the king were influenced by the opinions of the queen; and that the queen always inclined a listening ear to the counsels of saintly men. He laid his plans, therefore, with the customary wisdom of his cloth, to turn the ideas of the queen into the proper channel; and this was the purport of the worthy bishop's suggestions.

The bishopric of Jaen had for a long time been harassed by two Moorish castles, the scourge and terror of all that part of the country. They were situate on the frontiers of the kingdom of Granada, about four leagues from Jaen, in a deep, narrow, and rugged valley, surrounded by lofty mountains. Through this valley runs the Rio Frio, or "cold river," in a deep channel, between high precipitous rocks. On each side of the stream rise two vast rocks, nearly perpendicular, within a stone's throw of each other; blocking up the narrow gorge of the valley. On the summits of these rocks stood the two formidable castles of Cambil and Albahar, fortified with battlements and towers of great height and thickness. They were connected together by a bridge, thrown from rock to rock across the river. The road which passed through the valley traversed this bridge, and was completely commanded by these castles. They stood like two giants of romance, guarding the pass, and dominating the valley.

The kings of Granada, knowing the importance of these castles, kept them always well garrisoned and victualled, to stand a siege; with fleet steeds and hard riders, to forage the country of the Christians. The warlike race of the Abencerrages, the troops of the royal household, and others of the choicest chivalry of Granada, made them their strong-holds, from whence to sally forth on those predatory and roving enterprises; which were the delight of the Moorish cavaliers. As the wealthy bishopric of Jaen lay immediately at

hand, it suffered more peculiarly from these marauders. They drove off the fat beeves, and the flocks of sheep from the pastures, and swept the labourers from the field. They scoured the country to the very gates of Jaen; so that the citizens could not venture from their walls without the risk of being borne off captive to the dungeons of these castles.

The worthy bishop, like a good pastor, beheld, with grief of heart, his fat bishopric daily waxing leaner and leaner, and poorer and poorer; and his holy ire was kindled at the thought, that the possessions of the church should thus be at the mercy of a crew of infidels.

It was the urgent council of the bishop, therefore, that the military force thus providentially assembled in the neighbourhood, since it was apparently foiled in its attempt upon Moclin, should be turned against these insolent castles, and the country delivered from their domination. The grand cardinal supported the suggestion of the bishop, and declared, that he had long meditated the policy of a measure of the kind. Their united opinions found favour with the queen, and she despatched a letter on the subject to the king. It came just in time to relieve him from the distraction of a multitude of counsellors, and he immediately undertook the reduction of the castles.

The Marquis of Cadiz was, accordingly, sent in advance, with two thousand horse, to keep watch upon the garrisons, and prevent all entrance or exit until the king should arrive with the main army and the battering artillery. The queen, to be near at hand in case of need, moved her quarters to the city of Jaen, where she was received with martial honours by the belligerent bishop, who had buckled on his cuirass, and girded on his sword, to fight in the cause of his diocese.

In the meantime, the Marquis of Cadiz arrived in the valley, and completely shut up the Moors within their walls. The castles were under the command of Mahomet Lentin ben Usef, an Abencerrage, and one of the bravest cavaliers of Granada. In his garrisons were many troops of the fierce African tribe of Gomeres. Mahomet Lentin, confident in the strength of his fortresses, smiled, as he looked down from his battlements, upon the Christian cavalry, perplexed in the rough and narrow valley. He sent forth skirmishing parties to harass them; and there were many sharp combats between small parties and single knights; but the Moors were driven

back to the castles; and all attempts to send intelligence of their situation to Granada were intercepted by the vigilance of the Marquis of Cadiz.

At length the legions of the royal army came pouring, with fluttering banner and vaunting trumpet, along the defiles of the mountains. They halted before the castles; but the king could not find room, in the narrow and rugged valley, to form his camp: he had to divide it into three parts, which were posted on different heights, and his tents whitened the sides of the neighbouring hills. When the encampment was formed, the army remained gazing idly at the castles. The artillery was upwards of four leagues in the rear, and without artillery all attack would be in vain.

The alcayde, Mahomet Lentin, knew the nature of the road by which the artillery had to be brought. It was merely a rugged path, at times scaling almost perpendicular crags and precipices, up which it was utterly impossible for wheel carriages to pass; neither was it in the power of man or beast to draw up the lombards and other ponderous ordnance. He felt assured, therefore, that they never could be brought to the camp; and, without their aid, what could the Christians effect against his rock-built castles? He scoffed at them, therefore, as he saw their tents by day, and their fires by night, covering the surrounding heights. "Let them linger here a little while longer," said he, "and the autumnal torrents will wash them from the mountains."

While the alcayde was thus closely mewed up within his walls, and the Christians lay inactive in their camp, he noticed, one calm autumnal day, the sound of implements of labour echoing among the mountains, and now and then the crash of a fallen tree, or a thundering report, as if some rock had been heaved from its bed, and hurled into the valley. The alcayde was on the battlements of his castle, surrounded by his knights. "Methinks," said he, "these Christians are making war upon the rocks and trees of the mountains, since they find our castles unassailable."

The sounds did not cease even during the night; every now and then, the Moorish sentinel, as he paced the battlements, heard some crash echoing among the heights. The return of day explained the mystery. Scarcely did the sun shine against the summits of the mountains, than shouts burst from the cliffs opposite to the castles, and were answered

from the camp with joyful sound of kettle-drums and trumpets.

The astonished Moors lifted up their eyes, and beheld, as it were, a torrent of war breaking out of a narrow defile. There was a multitude of men with pickaxes, spades, and bars of iron, clearing away every obstacle, while behind them slowly moved along great teams of oxen, dragging heavy ordnance, and all the munitions of battering warfare.

"What cannot women and priests effect, when they unite in council!" exclaims again the worthy Antonio Agapida. The queen had held another consultation with the grand cardinal, and the belligerent bishop of Jaen. It was clear, that the heavy ordnance could never be conveyed to the camp by the regular road of the country, and on this must depend every hope of success. It was suggested, however, by the zealous bishop, that another road might be opened through a more practicable part of the mountains. It would be an undertaking extravagant and chimerical with ordinary means, and, therefore, unlooked for by the enemy; but what could not kings do, who had treasures and armies at command?

The project struck the enterprising spirit of the queen. Six thousand men, with pickaxes, crowbars, and every other necessary implement, were set to work, day and night, to break a road through the very centre of the mountains. No time was to be lost; for it was rumoured that El Zagal was about to march with a mighty host to the relief of the castles. The bustling Bishop of Jaen acted as pioneer, to mark the route and superintend the labourers; and the grand cardinal took care, that the work should never languish through lack of money.*

"When king's treasures," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "are dispensed by priestly hands, there is no stint, as the glorious annals of Spain bear witness." Under the guidance of these ghostly men, it seemed as if miracles were effected. Almost an entire mountain was levelled, valleys filled up, trees hewn down, rocks broken and overturned; in short, all the obstacles, which nature had heaped around, entirely and promptly vanquished. In little more than twelve days this gigantic work was accomplished, and the ordnance dragged to the camp, to the great triumph of the Christians, and confusion of the Moors.†

* Zurita, Anales de Aragon, lib. xx. c. 64. Pulgar, part iii. c. 51.

† Ibid.

No sooner was the heavy artillery arrived, than it was disposed in all haste upon the neighbouring heights. Francisco Ramirez de Madrid, the first engineer in Spain, superintended the batteries, and soon opened a destructive fire upon the castles.

When the valiant alcayde, Mahomet Lentin, found his towers tumbling about him, and his bravest men dashed from the walls, without the power of inflicting a wound upon the foe, his haughty spirit was greatly exasperated. "Of what avail," said he, "is all the prowess of knighthood against these cowardly engines, that murder from afar?"

For a whole day a tremendous fire kept thundering upon the castle of Albahar. The lombards discharged large stones, which demolished two of the towers, and all the battlements which guarded the portal. If any Moors attempted to defend the walls, or repair the breaches, they were shot down by ribadoquines, and other small pieces of artillery. The Christian soldiery issued forth from the camp, under cover of this fire, and, approaching the castles, discharged flights of arrows and stones through the openings made by the ordnance.

At length, to bring the siege to a conclusion, Francisco Ramirez elevated some of the heaviest artillery on a mount, that rose in form of a cone or pyramid, on the side of the river near to Albahar, and commanded both castles. This was an operation of great skill and excessive labour, but it was repaid by complete success; for the Moors did not dare to wait until this terrible battery should discharge its fury. Satisfied that all further resistance was vain, the valiant alcayde made signal for a parley. The articles of capitulation were soon arranged; the alcayde and his garrison were permitted to return in safety to the city of Granada, and the castles were delivered into the possession of King Ferdinand, on the day of the festival of St. Matthew, in the month of September. They were immediately repaired, strongly garrisoned, and given in charge to the city of Jaen.

The effects of this triumph were immediately apparent. Quiet and security once more settled upon the bishopric; the husbandmen tilled their fields in peace, the herds and flocks fattened unmolested in the pastures, and the vineyards yielded corpulent skinsful of rosy wine; the good bishop enjoyed, in the gratitude of his people, the approbation of his

conscience, the increase of his revenues, and the abundance of his table, a reward for all his toils and perils. "This glorious victory," exclaims Fray Antonio Agapida, "achieved by such extraordinary management and infinite labour, is a shining example of what a bishop can effect for the promotion of the faith, and the good of his diocese."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WHILE these events were taking place on the northern frontier of the kingdom of Granada, the important fortress of Alhama was neglected, and its commander, Don Gutiere de Padilla, clavero of Calatrava,* reduced to great perplexity: the remnant of the foraging party, which had been surprised and massacred by the fierce El Zagal, when on his way to Granada to receive the crown, had returned in confusion and dismay to the fortress; they could only speak of their own disgrace, being obliged to abandon their cavalgada, and to fly, pursued by a superior force. Of the flower of their party, the gallant knights of Calatrava, who had remained behind in the valley, they knew nothing. A few days cleared up the mystery, and brought tidings of their steeds, led in triumph into the gates of Granada; and their bleeding heads, borne at the saddlebows of the warriors of El Zagal. Their fellow knights, who formed a part of the garrison, were struck with horror at the dismal story, and panted to revenge their death; their number, however, was too much reduced by this loss to take the field; for the vega swarmed with the troops of El Zagal. They could not even venture forth to forage for provisions; and the defeat of the Count de Cabra having interrupted their customary supplies, they were reduced to such extremity, that they had to kill several of their horses for food.

Don Gutiere de Padilla, clavero of Calatrava, the commander of the fortress, was pondering one day over the gloomy state of affairs, when a Moor was brought before him, who had applied at the gate for an audience. He bore a budget, and appeared to be one of those itinerant merchants, who wandered about the country in those days, hanging on the

* Clavero of Calatrava is he who bears the keys of the castle, convents, and archives of the order. It is an office of great honour and distinction.

skirts of armies, to purchase the spoils of the soldiery, and who would pretend to sell amulets, trinkets, and perfumes, but would often draw forth from their wallets articles of great rarity and value: rich shawls, chains of gold, necklaces of pearls and diamonds, and costly gems, the plunder of camps and cities. The Moor approached the clavero with a mysterious look. "Senior," said he, "I would speak with you alone; I have a precious jewel to dispose of." "I need no jewels," said the clavero, abruptly; take thy wares to the soldiery." "By the blood of him who died on the cross," exclaimed the Moor, with earnest solemnity, "do not turn a deaf ear to my offer: the jewel I have to sell would be to you of inestimable value, and you alone can be the purchaser."

The clavero was moved by the earnestness of the Moor, and perceived, that, under the figurative language common to his countrymen, he concealed some meaning of importance. He made a sign, therefore, to his attendants to withdraw; the Moor looked after them, until the door closed; then advancing cautiously, "What will you give me," said he, "if I deliver the fortress of Zalea into your hands?"

Zalea was a strong town, about two leagues distant, which had long been a hostile and dangerous neighbour to Alhama; its warriors laying frequent ambuscades to surprise the knights of Calatrava, when out upon a forage, and to intercept and cut off their supplies and cavalgadas.

The clavero looked with mingled surprise and distrust at this itinerant pedlar, who thus offered to traffic for a warlike town. "Thou talkest," said he, "of selling me Zalea; what means hast thou of making good the sale?" "I have a brother in the garrison," replied the Moor, "who for a proper sum paid down, will admit a body of troops by night into the citadel."

"And for a sum of gold, then," said the clavero, regarding him with stern scrutiny, "thou art prepared to betray thy people and thy faith?"

"I abjure them and their faith," replied the Moor: "my mother was a Castilian captive; her people shall be my people, and her religion my religion."

The cautious clavero still distrusted the sincerity of this mongrel Moor and piebald Christian. "What assurance," continued he, "have I, that thou wilt deal more truly with

me, than with the alcayde of the fortress thou wouldst betray? To me thou hast no tie of fealty, to him thou owest thy allegiance."

"I owe him no allegiance!" cried the Moor, fire flashing from his eyes: "the alcayde is a tyrant, a dog! he has robbed me of my merchandise, stripped me of my lawful booty, and ordered me the bastinado, because I dared to complain. May the curse of God light upon me, if I rest contented, until I have ample vengeance!"

"Enough," said the clavero; "I will trust to thy vengeance, even more than to thy Christianity."

Don Gutiere now summoned a council of his principal knights. They were all eager for the enterprise, as a mode of revenging the death of their companions, and wiping off the stigma cast upon the order by the late defeat. Spies were sent to reconnoitre Zalea, and to communicate with the brother of the Moor; the sum to be paid as a recompense was adjusted, and every arrangement made for the enterprise.

On the appointed night, a party of cavaliers set out under the guidance of the Moor. When they came near to Zalea, their leader bound the hands of the guide behind his back, and pledged his knightly word to strike him dead on the least sign of treachery; he then bade him lead the way. It was midnight when they arrived in silence under the walls of the citadel. At a low signal, a ladder of ropes was let down: Gutiere Muñoz and Pedro de Alvarado were the first to ascend, followed by half a dozen others. They surprised the guards, cut them down, threw them over the wall, and gained possession of a tower. The alarm was given, the whole citadel was in confusion, but already the knights of Calatrava were in every part; they called to each other to remember their brethren massacred in the valley of the vega, and their bloody heads borne in triumph to Granada. They fought with sanguinary fury; most of the half-armed and bewildered garrison were put to the sword; the rest were taken prisoners; in an hour they were masters of the citadel, and the town submitted of course. They found the magazine stored with all kinds of provisions, with which they loaded an immense train of beasts of burden, for the relief of the famishing garrison of Alhama.

Thus did the gallant knights of Calatrava gain the strong

town of Zalea, with scarcely any loss, and atone for the inglorious defeat sustained by their companions. Large reinforcements and supplies from the sovereigns arriving soon after, strengthened them in their own fortress, and enabled them to keep possession of their new conquest. This gallant affair took place about the same time as the capture of Cambil and Albahar; and these two achievements gave a prosperous termination to the chequered events of this important year. Ferdinand and Isabella retired for the winter to Alcada de Henares, where the queen, on the 16th of December gave birth to the Infanta Catherine, afterwards spouse to Henry VIII. of England.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The personal exploits with which El Zagal had commenced his reign, in surprising the knights of Calatrava, and defeating the Count de Cabra, had given him a transient popularity, which he had promoted by feasts and tournaments, and other public rejoicings, in which the Moors delighted. Knowing, however, the uncertain nature of the people over whom he reigned, he feared some capricious revolution in favour of his deposed brother, Muley Aben Hassan. That once fiery old monarch was now blind and bedridden, and lived in a kind of durance in the city of Almunecar. He was treated, however, with deference and attention, for the garrison had been originally appointed by himself. El Zagal, having now a little leisure during the interval of the campaigns, became suddenly solicitous about the death of his brother, and had him removed to Salobreña, for the benefit of purer and more salubrious air.

The small town of Salobreña was situate on a lofty hill, that rose out of the centre of a beautiful and fertile valley on the Mediterranean coast. It was protected by a strong castle, built by the Moorish kings as a place of deposit for their treasures. Here also they sent such of their sons and brothers as might endanger the security of their reign. They lived here, prisoners at large, in a state of voluptuous repose, under a serene sky, in a soft climate and luxuriant valley. The palace was adorned with fountains, and delicious gardens, and perfumed baths; a harem of beauties was at the command of the royal captives, and music and the dance beguiled the lag-

ging hours. Nothing was denied them but the liberty to depart; that alone was wanting to render the abode a perfect Paradise.

Notwithstanding the extreme salubrity of the air, and the assiduous attentions of the commander, who was devoted to El Zagal, and had been particularly charged by him to be watchful over the health of his brother, the old monarch had not been here many days before he expired. There was nothing surprising in this event, for life with him had long glimmered in the socket; but the measures immediately taken by El Zagal roused the suspicions of the public. With indecent haste he ordered that the treasures of the deceased should be packed upon mules and conveyed to Granada, where he took possession of them, to the exclusion of the children. The sultana Zorayna and her two sons were imprisoned in the Alhambra, in the tower of Comares; the same place where, by her instigation, the virtuous Ayxa la Horra and her son Boabdil had once been confined. There she had leisure to ruminate on the disappointment of all her schemes, perfidiously executed, for the advancement of those sons who were her fellow prisoners. The corpse of old Muley Aben Hassan was also brought to Granada; not in state, like the remains of a once powerful sovereign, but transported ignominiously on a mule. It received no funeral honours, but was borne obscurely to the grave by two Christian captives, and deposited in the royal Osario or charnel house.*

No sooner were the people well assured that old Muley Aben Hassan was dead and buried, than they all, with one accord, began to deplore his loss and extoll his memory. They admitted that he had been fierce and cruel, but then he had been brave; it was true he had pulled down this war upon their heads, but he had himself also been crushed by it. In a word, he was dead, and his death atoned for every fault; for a king, just deceased, is generally either a hero or a saint. In proportion as they ceased to hate Muley Aben Hassan, they began to hate his brother El Zagal. The manner of the old king's death, the eagerness to seize upon his treasures, the scandalous neglect of his corpse, and the imprisonment of his sultana and children, all filled the public mind with dark suspicions, and the name of El Zagal was often coupled with the epithets of fratricide in the low murmurings of the people.

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. lxxvii.

As the public must always have some leading person to like as well as to hate, there began once more to be an inquiry after Boabdil el Chico. That unfortunate monarch was living at Cordova, under the shade of the cold friendship of Ferdinand, who had ceased to regard him with much attention when he was no longer useful to his interests. No sooner, however, did the public favour once more incline towards him than the kindness of the catholic monarch immediately revived. He furnished him with money and means again to elevate his standard, and create a division in the Moorish power. By this assistance Boabdil established the shadow of a court at Velez el Blanco, a strong frontier town on the confines of Murcia, where he remained, as it were, with one foot over the border, and ready to draw that back at a moment's warning. His presence, however, gave new life to his faction in Granada. It is true, the more courtly and opulent inhabitants of the quarter of the Alhambra still rallied round the throne of El Zagal as the great seat of power, but then the inhabitants of the albaycin, the poorest part of the community, who had nothing to risk and nothing to lose, were almost unanimous in favour of the indigent Boabdil. So it is in this wonderful system of sublunary affairs, the rich befriend the rich, the powerful stand by the powerful, while the poor enjoy the sterile assistance of their fellows: thus, each one seeking his kind, the admirable order of all things is maintained, and a universal harmony prevails.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Great and glorious was the style with which the Catholic sovereigns opened another year's campaign of this eventful war. It was like commencing another act of a stately and heroic drama, where the curtain rises to the inspiring sound of martial melody, and the whole stage glitters with the array of warriors and the pomp of arms. The ancient city of Cordova was the place appointed by the sovereigns for the assemblage of the troops, and, early in the spring of 1486, the fair valley of the Guadalquivir resounded with the shrill blast of trumpet and the impatient neighing of the war horse. In this splendid era of Spanish chivalry there was a rivalship among the nobles, who most should distinguish himself by the splendour of his appearance and the number and equipments

of his feudal followers. Every day beheld some cavalier of note, the representative of some proud and powerful house, entering the gates of Cordova with sound of trumpet, and displaying his banner and device, renowned in many a contest. He would appear in sumptuous array, surrounded by pages and lackeys no less gorgeously attired, and followed by a host of vassals and retainers; horse and foot, all admirably equipped in burnished armour.

Such was the state of Don Inigo Lopez de Mendoza, Duke of Infantado, who may be cited as a picture of a warlike noble of those times. He brought with him five hundred men-at-arms of his household, equipped and mounted *à la geneta* and *à la guisa*. The cavaliers who attended him were both magnificently armed and dressed. The housings of fifty of his horses were of rich cloth embroidered with gold, and others were of brocade. The sumpter mules had housings of the same, with halters of silk; while the bridles, headpieces, and all the harnessing glittered with silver.

The camp equipage of these noble and luxurious warriors was equally magnificent. Their tents were gay pavilions of various colours, fitted up with silken hangings, and decorated with fluttering pennons. They had vessels of gold and silver for the service of their tables, as if they were about to engage in a course of stately feasts and courtly revels, instead of the stern encounters of rugged and mountainous warfare. Sometimes they passed through the streets of Cordova at night, in splendid cavalcade, with great numbers of lighted torches, the rays of which, falling upon polished armour, and nodding plumes, and silken scarfs, and trappings of golden embroidery, filled all beholders with admiration.*

But it was not the chivalry of Spain alone which thronged the streets of Cordova. The fame of this war had spread throughout Christendom: it was considered a kind of crusade, and Catholic knights from all parts hastened to signalize themselves in so holy a cause. There were several valiant chevaliers from France, among whom the most distinguished was Gaston du Léon, seneschal of Toulouse. With him came a gallant train, well armed and mounted, and decorated with rich surcoats and panaches of feathers. These cavaliers, it is said, eclipsed all others in the light festivities of the court. They were devoted to the fair, but not after the solemn and

* Pulgar, part iii. cap 11. 56.

passionate manner of the Spanish lovers: they were gay, gallant, and joyous in their amours, and captivated by the vivacity of their attacks. They were at first held in light estimation by the grave and stately Spanish knights, until they made themselves to be respected by their wonderful prowess in the field.

The most conspicuous of the volunteers, however, who appeared in Cordova on this occasion, was an English knight of royal connexion. This was the Lord Scales, Earl of Rivers, related to the Queen of England, wife of Henry VII. He had distinguished himself, in the preceding year, at the battle of Bosworth Field, where Henry Tudor, then Earl of Richmond, overcame Richard III. That decisive battle having left the country at peace, the Earl of Rivers, retaining a passion for warlike scenes, repaired to the Castilian court, to keep his arms in exercise in a campaign against the Moors. He brought with him a hundred archers, all dexterous with the long bow and the cloth yard arrow, also two hundred yeomen, armed cap-à-piè, who fought with pike and battle-axe; men robust of frame, and of prodigious strength.

The worthy Padre Fray Antonio Agapida describes this stranger knight and his followers with his accustomed accuracy and minuteness. "This cavalier," he observes, "was from the island of England, and brought with him a train of his vassals: men who had been hardened in certain civil wars which had raged in their country. They were a comely race of men, but too fair and fresh for warriors; not having the sunburnt, martial hue of our old Castilian soldiery. They were huge feeders, also, and deep carousers; and could not accommodate themselves to the sober diet of our troops, but must fain eat and drink after the manner of their own country. They were often noisy and unruly, also, in their wassail; and their quarter of the camp was prone to be a scene of loud revel and sudden brawl. They were withal of great pride: yet it was not like our inflammable Spanish pride: they stood not much upon the *pundonor* and high punctilio, and rarely drew the stiletto in their disputes; but their pride was silent and contumelious. Though from a remote, and somewhat barbarous island, they yet believed themselves the most perfect men upon earth; and magnified their chieftain, the Lord Scales, beyond the greatest of our grandees. With all this, it must be said of them, that they were marvellous good

men in the field, dexterous archers, and powerful with the battle-axe. In their great pride and self will, they always sought to press in the advance, and take the post of danger, trying to outvie our Spanish chivalry. They did not rush forward fiercely, or make a brilliant onset, like the Moorish and Spanish troops, but they went into the fight deliberately, and persisted obstinately, and were slow to find out when they were beaten. Withal, they were much esteemed, yet little liked, by our soldiery, who considered them staunch companions in the field, yet coveted but little fellowship with them in the camp.

"Their commander, the Lord Scales, was an accomplished cavalier, of gracious and noble presence, and fair speech. It was a marvel to see so much courtesy in a knight brought up so far from our Castilian court. He was much honoured by the king and queen, and found great favour with the fair dames about the court; who, indeed, are rather prone to be pleased with foreign cavaliers. He went always in costly state, attended by pages and esquires, and accompanied by noble young cavaliers of his country, who had enrolled themselves under his banner, to learn the gentle exercise of arms. In all pageants and festivals, the eyes of the populace were attracted by the singular bearing and rich array of the English earl and his train, who prided themselves in always appearing in the garb and manner of their country; and were indeed something very magnificent, delectable, and strange to behold."

The worthy chronicler is no less elaborate in his description of the masters of Santiago, Calatrava, and Alcantara, and their valiant knights; armed at all points, and decorated with the badges of their orders. "These," he affirms, "were the flower of Christian chivalry. Being constantly in service, they became more steadfast and accomplished in discipline than the irregular and temporary levies of the feudal nobles. Calm, solemn, and stately, they sat like towers upon their powerful chargers. On parades, they manifested none of the show and ostentation of the other troops. Neither in battle did they endeavour to signalise themselves by any fiery vivacity, or desperate and vain-glorious exploit; everything with them was measured and sedate; yet it was observed, that none were more warlike in their appearance in the camp, or more terrible for their achievements in the field."

The gorgeous magnificence of the Spanish nobles found but little favour in the eyes of the sovereigns. They saw, that it caused a competition in expense, ruinous to cavaliers of moderate fortune; and they feared, that a softness and effeminacy might thus be introduced, incompatible with the stern nature of the war. They signified their disapprobation to several of the principal noblemen, and recommended a more sober and soldier-like display while in actual service.

"These are rare troops for a tourney, my lord," said Ferdinand, to the Duke of Infantado, as he beheld his retainers glittering in gold and embroidery; "but gold, though gorgeous, is soft and yielding: iron is the metal for the field."

"Sire," replied the duke, "if my men parade in gold, your majesty will find they fight with steel." The king smiled, but shook his head; and the duke treasured up his speech in his heart.

It remains now to reveal the immediate object of this mighty and chivalrous preparation; which had, in fact, the gratification of a royal pique at bottom. The severe lesson which Ferdinand had received from the veteran Ali Atar, before the walls of Loxa, though it had been of great service in rendering him wary in his attacks upon fortified places, yet rankled sorely in his mind; and he had ever since held Loxa in peculiar odium. It was, in truth, one of the most belligerent and troublesome cities on the borders; incessantly harassing Andalusia by its incursions. It also intervened between the Christian territories and Alhama, and other important places, gained in the kingdom of Granada. For all these reasons, King Ferdinand had determined to make another grand attempt upon this warrior city; and for this purpose he had summoned to the field his most powerful chivalry.

It was in the month of May that the king sallied from Cordova, at the head of his army. He had twelve thousand cavalry, and forty thousand foot soldiers, with crossbows, lances, and arquebuses. There were six thousand pioneers, with hatchets, pickaxes, and crowbars, for levelling roads. He took with him, also, a great train of lombards and other heavy artillery; with a body of Germans, skilled in the service of ordnance and the art of battering walls.

"It was a glorious spectacle," says Fray Antonio Agapida,

"to behold this pompous pageant issuing forth from Cordova: the pennons and devices of the proudest houses of Spain, with those of gallant stranger knights, fluttering above a sea of crests and plumes; to see it slowly moving, with flash of helmet, and cuirass, and buckler, across the ancient bridge, and reflected in the waters of the Guadalquivir; while the neigh of steed, and the blast of trumpet, vibrated in the air, and resounded to the distant mountains. But, above all," concludes the good father, with his accustomed zeal, "it was triumphant to behold the standard of the faith everywhere displayed; and to reflect, that this was no worldly-minded army, intent upon some temporal scheme of ambition or revenge; but a Christian host, bound on a crusade to extirpate the vile seed of Mahomet from the land, and to extend the pure dominion of the church."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

WHILE perfect unity of object, and harmony of operation, gave power to the Christian arms, the devoted kingdom of Granada continued a prey to internal feuds. The transient popularity of El Zagal had declined ever since the death of his brother, and the party of Boabdil el Chico was daily gaining strength. The albaycin and the Alhambra were again arrayed against each other in deadly strife, and the streets of unhappy Granada were daily dyed in the blood of her children. In the midst of these dissensions, tidings arrived of the formidable army assembling at Cördöva. The rival factions paused in their infatuated brawls, and were roused to a temporary sense of the common danger. They forthwith resorted to their old expedient of new modelling their government, or rather, of making and unmaking kings. The elevation of El Zagal to the throne had not produced the desired effect. What, then, was to be done? Recall Boabdil el Chico, and acknowledge him again as sovereign? While they were in a popular tumult of deliberation, Hamet Aben Zarrax, surnamed El Santo, arose among them. This was the same wild, melancholy man, who had predicted the woes of Granada. He issued from one of the caverns of the adjacent height, which overhangs the Darro, and has since been called the Holy Mountain. His appearance was more haggard than ever; for the unheeded spirit of prophecy seemed to have

turned inwardly, and preyed upon his vitals. "Beware, oh Moslems!" exclaimed he, "of men, who are eager to govern, yet are unable to protect! Why slaughter each other for El Chico or El Zagal? Let your kings renounce their contests, and unite for the salvation of Granada, or let them be deposed!"

Hamet Aben Zarrax had long been revered as a saint; he was now considered an oracle. The old men and the nobles immediately consulted together how the two rival kings might be brought to accord. They had tried most expedients: it was now determined to divide the kingdom between them; giving Granada, Malaga, Velez Malaga, Almeria, Almuneçar, and their dependencies, to El Zagal, and the residue to Boabdil el Chico. Among the cities granted to the latter, Loxa was particularly specified, with a condition, that he should immediately take command of it in person; for the council thought the favour he enjoyed with the Castilian monarchs might avert the threatened attack.

El Zagal readily accorded to this arrangement. He had been hastily elevated to the throne by an ebullition of the people, and might be as hastily cast down again. It secured him one half of a kingdom to which he had no hereditary right, and he trusted to force or fraud to gain the other half hereafter. The wily old monarch even sent a deputation to his nephew, making a merit of offering him cheerfully the half, which he had thus been compelled to relinquish, and inviting him to enter into an amicable coalition for the good of the country.

The heart of Boabdil shrunk from all connexion with a man who had sought his life, and whom he regarded as the murderer of his kindred. He accepted one half of the kingdom as an offer from the nation, not to be rejected by a prince, who scarcely held possession of the ground he stood on. He asserted, nevertheless, his absolute right to the whole, and only submitted to the partition out of anxiety for the present good of his people. He assembled his handful of adherents, and prepared to hasten to Loxa. As he mounted his horse to depart, Hamet Aben Zarrax stood suddenly before him. "Be true to thy country and thy faith," cried he: "hold no further communication with these Christian dogs. Trust not the hollow hearted friendship of the Castilian king: he is mining the earth beneath thy feet. Choose one of two things: be a sovereign or a slave; thou canst not be both!"

Boabdil ruminated on these words: he made many wise resolutions; but he was prone always to act from the impulse of the moment, and was unfortunately given to temporize in his policy. He wrote to Ferdinand, informing him, that Loxa and certain other cities had returned to their allegiance, and that he held them as vassal to the Castilian crown, according to their convention. He conjured him, therefore, to refrain from any meditated attack, offering free passage to the Spanish army to Malaga, or any other place under the dominion of his uncle.*

Ferdinand turned a deaf ear to the entreaty, and to all professions of friendship and vassalage. Boabdil was nothing to him, but as an instrument for stirring up the flames of civil discord. He now insisted, that he had entered into a hostile league with his uncle, and had, consequently, forfeited all claims to his indulgence; and he prosecuted with the greater earnestness his campaign against the city of Loxa.

"Thus," observes the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida, "did this most sagacious sovereign act upon the text in the eleventh chapter of the evangelist St. Luke, that 'a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.'" He had induced these infidels to waste and destroy themselves by internal dissensions, and finally cast forth the survivor. While the Moorish monarchs, by their ruinous contests, made good the old Castilian proverb in cases of civil war, "El vencido vencido, y el vencidor perdido," "the conquered conquered, and the conqueror undone."†

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE royal army, on its march against Loxa, lay encamped one pleasant evening in May, in a meadow, on the banks of the river Yeguas, around the foot of a lofty cliff, called the Rock of the Lovers. The quarters of each nobleman formed, as it were, a separate little encampment; his stately pavilion, surmounted by his fluttering pennon, rising above the surrounding tents of his vassals and retainers. A little apart from the others, as it were in proud reserve, was the encampment of the English earl. It was sumptuous in its furniture, and complete in its munitions. Archers, and soldiers armed with battleaxes, kept guard around it; while above, the

* Zurita, lib. xx. c. 68. † Garibay, lib. xl. c. 33.

standard of England rolled out its ample folds, and flapped in the evening breeze.

The mingled sounds of various tongues and nations were heard from the soldiery, as they watered their horses in the stream, or busied themselves round the fires which began to glow, here and there, in the twilight: the gay chanson of the Frenchman, singing of his amours on the pleasant banks of the Loire, or the sunny regions of the Garonne; the broad guttural tones of the German, chanting some doughty *krieger-lied*, or extolling the vintage of the Rhine; the wild romance of the Spaniard, reciting the achievements of the Cid, and many a famous passage of the Moorish wars; and the long and melancholy ditty of the Englishman, treating of some feudal hero or redoubtable outlaw of his distant island.

On a rising ground, commanding a view of the whole encampment, stood the ample and magnificent pavilion of the king. with the banner of Castile and Arragon, and the holy standard of the cross erected before it. In this tent were assembled the principal commanders of the army, having been summoned by Ferdinand to a council of war, on receiving tidings, that Boabdil had thrown himself into Loxa, with a considerable reinforcement. After some consultation, it was determined to invest Loxa on both sides: one part of the army was to seize upon the dangerous but commanding height of Santo Albohacin, in front of the city; while the remainder, making a circuit, should encamp on the opposite side.

No sooner was this resolved upon, than the Marquis of Cadiz stood forth, and claimed the post of danger, on behalf of himself and those cavaliers, his companions in arms, who had been compelled to relinquish it by the general retreat of the army on the former siege. The enemy had exulted over them, as if driven from it in disgrace. To regain that perilous height, to pitch their tents upon it, and to avenge the blood of their valiant compeer, the master of Calatrava, who had fallen upon it, was due to their fame: the marquis demanded, therefore, that they might lead the advance, and secure the height, engaging to hold the enemy employed, until the main army should take its position on the opposite side of the city!

King Ferdinand readily granted his permission, upon which the Count de Cabra begged to be admitted to a share of the enterprise. He had always been accustomed to serve in the advance; and now that Boabdil was in the field, and a king

was to be taken, he could not content himself with remaining in the rear. Ferdinand yielded his consent; for he was disposed to give the good count every opportunity to retrieve his late disaster.

The English earl, when he heard there was a work of danger in question, was eager to be of the party; but the king restrained his ardour. "These cavaliers," said he, "conceive that they have an account to settle with their pride. Let them have the enterprise to themselves, my lord: if you follow these Moorish wars long, you will find no lack of perilous service."

The Marquis of Cadiz and his companions in arms struck their tents before daybreak. They were five thousand horse, and twelve thousand foot, and they marched rapidly along the defiles of the mountains; the cavaliers being anxious to strike the blow, and get possession of the height of Albohacin, before the king, with the main army, should arrive to their assistance.

The city of Loxa stands on a high hill, between two mountains, on the banks of the Xenil. To attain the height in question, the troops had to pass over a tract of country rugged and broken, and a deep valley, intersected by the canals and water courses, with which the Moors irrigated their lands. They were extremely embarrassed in this part of their march, and in imminent risk of being cut up in detail, before they could reach the height. The Count de Cabra, with his usual eagerness, endeavoured to push across this valley, in defiance of every obstacle. He, in consequence, soon became entangled with his cavalry among the canals; but his impatience would not permit him to retrace his steps, and choose a more practicable but circuitous route. Others slowly crossed another part of the valley by the aid of pontoons; while the Marquis of Cadiz, Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and the Count de Ureña, being more experienced in the ground, from their former campaign, made a circuit round the bottom of the height, and, thus ascending, began to display their squadrons, and elevate their banners on the redoubtable post, which in the former siege, they had been compelled so reluctantly to abandon.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The advance of the Christian army upon Loxa threw the wavering Boabdil el Chico into one of his usual dilemmas; and he was greatly perplexed between his oath of allegiance to the Spanish sovereigns, and his sense of duty to his subjects. His doubts were determined by the sight of the enemy, glittering upon the height of Albohacin, and by the clamours of the people to be led forth to battle. "Allah!" exclaimed he, "thou knowest my heart; thou knowest I have been true in my faith to this Christian monarch! I have offered to hold Loxa as his vassal, but he has preferred to approach it as an enemy: on his head be the infraction of our treaty!"

Boabdil was not wanting in courage; he only needed decision. When he had once made up his mind, he acted vigorously. The misfortune was, he either did not make it up at all, or he made it up too late. He who decides tardily, generally acts rashly; endeavouring, to compensate, by hurry of action, for slowness of deliberation. Boabdil hastily buckled on his armour, and sallied forth, surrounded by his guards, and at the head of five hundred horse, and four thousand foot, the flower of his army. Some he detached to skirmish with the Christians, who were scattered and perplexed in the valley, and to prevent their concentrating their forces; while, with his main body, he pressed forward, to drive the enemy from the height of Albohacin, before they had time to collect there in any number, or to fortify themselves in that important position.

The worthy Count de Cabra was yet entangled, with his cavalry, among the water courses of the valley, when he heard the war cries of the Moors, and saw their army rushing over the bridge. He recognised Boabdil himself by his splendid armour, the magnificent caparison of his steed, and the brilliant guard which surrounded him. The royal host swept on towards the height. An intervening hill hid it from his sight; but loud shouts and cries, the din of drums and trumpets, and the reports of arquebuses, gave note, that the battle had begun.

Here was a royal prize in the field, and the Count de Cabra unable to share in the action! The good cavalier was in an agony of impatience. Every attempt to force his way across the valley only plunged him into new difficulties. At length,

after many eager but ineffectual efforts, he was obliged to order his troops to dismount, and slowly and carefully to lead their horses back, along slippery paths, and amid plashes of mire and water, where often there was scarcely a foothold. The good count groaned in spirit, and was in a profuse sweat with mere impatience as he went, fearing the battle might be fought, and the prize won or lost, before he could reach the field. Having at length toilfully unravelled the mazes of the valley, and arrived at firmer ground, he ordered his troops to mount, and led them full gallop to the height. Part of the good count's wishes were satisfied, but the dearest were disappointed. He came in season to partake of the very hottest of the fight, but the royal prize was no longer in the field.

Boabdil had led on his men with impetuous valour, or rather with hurried rashness. Heedlessly exposing himself in the front of the battle, he received two wounds in the very first encounter. His guards rallied round him, defended him with matchless valour, and bore him bleeding out of the action. The Count de Cabra arrived just in time to see the loyal squadron crossing the bridge, and slowly conveying their disabled monarch towards the gate of the city.

The departure of Boabdil made no difference in the fury of the contest. A Moorish warrior, dark and terrible in aspect, mounted on a black charger, and followed by a band of savage Gomeres, rushed forward to take the lead. It was Hamet el Zegri, the fierce alcayde of Ronda, with the remnant of his once redoubtable garrison. Animated by his example, the Moors renewed their assaults upon the height. It was bravely defended on one side by the Marquis of Cadiz, on another by Don Alonzo de Aguilar; and as fast as the Moors ascended, they were driven back and dashed down the declivities. The Count de Ureña took his stand upon the fatal spot where his brother had fallen. His followers entered with zeal into the feelings of their commander; and heaps of the enemy sunk beneath their weapons, sacrifices to the manes of the lamented master of Calatrava.

The battle continued with incredible obstinacy. The Moors knew the importance of the height to the safety of the city; the cavaliers felt their honours staked to maintain it. Fresh supplies of troops were poured out of the city; some battled on the height, while some attacked the Christians who were still in the valley, and among the orchards and gardens, to

prevent their uniting their forces. The troops in the valley were gradually driven back, and the whole host of the Moors swept around the Albohacin. The situation of the Marquis of Cadiz and his companions was perilous in the extreme; they were a mere handful; and while they were fighting hand to hand with the Moors who assailed the height, they were galled from a distance by the crossbows and arquebuses of a host, that augmented each moment in number. At this critical juncture, King Ferdinand emerged from the mountains with the main body of the army, and advanced to an eminence commanding a full view of the field of action. By his side was the noble English cavalier, the Earl of Rivers. This was the first time he had witnessed a scene of Moorish warfare. He looked with eager interest at the chance medley fight before him,—the wild career of cavalry, the irregular and tumultuous rush of infantry, and Christian helm and Moorish turban intermingling in deadly struggle. His high blood mounted at the sight; and his very soul was stirred within him, by the confused war cries, the clangour of drums and trumpets, and the reports of arquebuses, that came echoing up the mountains. Seeing the king was sending a reinforcement to the field, he entreated permission to mingle in the affray, and fight according to the fashion of his country. His request being granted, he alighted from his steed. He was merely armed *en blanco;* that is to say, with morion, back-piece, and breast-plate; his sword was girded by his side, and in his hand he wielded a powerful battleaxe. He was followed by a body of his yeomen, armed in like manner, and by a band of archers, with bows made of the tough English yew tree. The earl turned to his troops, and addressed them briefly and bluntly, according to the manner of his country. "Remember, my merry men all," said he, "the eyes of strangers are upon you; you are in a foreign land, fighting for the glory of God, and the honour of merry old England!" A loud shout was the reply. The earl waved his battleaxe over his head. "St. George for England!" cried he; and, to the inspiring sound of this old English war cry, he and his followers rushed down to the battle, with manly and courageous hearts.*

They soon made their way into the midst of the enemy; but, when engaged in the hottest of the fight, they made no shouts

* Cura de los Palacios.

or outcries. They pressed steadily forward, dealing their blows to right and left, hewing down the Moors, and cutting their way with their battleaxes, like woodmen in a forest; while the archers, pressing into the opening they made, plied their bows vigorously, and spread death on every side.

When the Castilian mountaineers beheld the valour of the English yeomanry, they would not be out-done in hardihood. They could not vie with them in weight and bulk, but for vigour and activity they were surpassed by none. They kept pace with them, therefore, with equal heart and rival prowess, and gave a brave support to the stout islanders.

The Moors were confounded by the fury of these assaults, and disheartened by the loss of Hamet el Zegri, who was carried wounded from the field. They gradually fell back upon the bridge; the Christians followed up their advantage, and drove them over it tumultuously. The Moors retreated into the suburb, and Lord Rivers and his troops entered with them pell mell, fighting in the streets and in the houses. King Ferdinand came up to the scene of action with his royal guard, and the infidels were all driven within the city walls. Thus were the suburbs gained by the hardihood of the English lord, without such an event having been premeditated.*

The Earl of Rivers, notwithstanding he had received a wound, still urged forward in the attack. He penetrated almost to the city gate, in defiance of a shower of missiles, that slew many of his followers. A stone, hurled from the battlements, checked his impetuous career. It struck him in the face, dashed out two of his front teeth, and laid him senseless on the earth. He was removed to a short distance by his men; but, recovering his senses, refused to permit himself to be taken from the suburb.

When the contest was over, the streets presented a piteous spectacle, so many of their inhabitants had died in the defence of their threshholds, or been slaughtered without resistance. Among the victims was a poor weaver, who had been at work in his dwelling at this turbulent moment. His wife urged him to fly into the city. "Why should I fly?" said the Moor, "to be reserved for hunger and slavery? I tell you, wife, I will abide here; for better is it to die quickly by the

* Cura de los Palacios, MS.

steel, than to perish piecemeal in chains and dungeons." He said no more, but resumed his occupation of weaving; and, in the indiscriminate fury of the assault, was slaughtered at his loom.*

The Christians remained masters of the field, and proceeded to pitch three encampments for the prosecution of the siege. The king, with the great body of the army, took a position on the side of the city next to Granada. The Marquis of Cadiz and his brave companions once more pitched their tents upon the height of Santo Albohacin; but the English earl planted his standard sturdily within the suburb he had taken.

CHAPTER XL.

HAVING possession of the heights of Albohacin, and the suburb of the city, the Christians were enabled to choose the most favourable situations for their batteries. They immediately destroyed the stone bridge, by which the garrison had made its sallies; and they threw two wooden bridges across the river, and others over the canals and streams, so as to establish an easy communication between the different camps.

When all was arranged, a heavy fire was opened upon the city from various points. They threw not only balls of stone and iron, but great carcasses of fire, which burst like meteors on the houses, wrapping them instantly in a blaze. The walls were shattered, and the towers toppled down by tremendous discharges from the lombards. Through the openings thus made, they could behold the interior of the city; houses tumbling down or in flames; men, women, and children flying in terror through the streets, and slaughtered by the showers of missiles sent through these openings from smaller artillery, and from crossbows and arquebuses.

The Moors attempted to repair the breaches; but fresh discharges from the lombards buried them beneath the ruins of the walls they were mending. In their despair, many of the inhabitants rushed forth into the narrow streets of the suburbs, and assailed the Christians with darts, cimeters, and poniards; seeking to destroy rather than defend, and heedless of death, in the confidence, that to die fighting with an unbeliever was to be translated at once to paradise.

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 58.

For two nights and a day this awful scene continued; when certain of the principal inhabitants began to reflect upon the hopelessness of resistance. Their king was disabled; their principal captains were either killed or wounded; their fortifications little better than heaps of ruins. They had urged the unfortunate Boabdil to the conflict; they now clamoured for a capitulation. A parley was procured from the Christian monarch, and the terms of surrender were soon adjusted. They were to yield up the city immediately, with all their Christian captives, and to sally forth with as much of their property as they could take with them. The Marquis of Cadiz, on whose honour and humanity they had great reliance, was to escort them to Granada, to protect them from assault or robbery. Such as chose to remain in Spain were to be permitted to reside in Castile, Arragon, or Valencia. As to Boabdil el Chico, he was to do homage as vassal to King Ferdinand; but no charge was to be urged against him, of having violated his former pledge. If he should yield up all pretensions to Granada, the title of Duke of Guadix was to be assigned him, and the territory thereto annexed, provided it should be recovered from El Zagal within six months.

The capitulation being arranged, they gave as hostages the alcayde of the city, and the principal officers, together with the sons of their late chieftain, the veteran Ali Atar. The warriors of Loxa then issued forth, humbled and dejected, at having to surrender those walls, which they had so long maintained with valour and renown; and the women and children filled the air with lamentations, at being exiled from their native homes.

Last came forth Boabdil, most truly called El Zogoybi, the unlucky. Accustomed, as he had been, to be crowned and uncrowned; to be ransomed, and treated as a matter of bargain, he had acceded of course to the capitulation. He was enfeebled by his wounds, and had an air of dejection; yet, it is said, his conscience acquitted him of a breach of faith towards the Castilian sovereigns; and the personal valour he had displayed had caused a sympathy for him among many of the Christian cavaliers. He kneeled to Ferdinand, according to the forms of vassalage, and then departed in melancholy mood for Priego, a town about three leagues distant. Ferdinand immediately ordered Loxa to be re-

paired and strongly garrisoned. He was greatly elated at the capture of this place, in consequence of his former defeat before its walls. He passed great encomiums upon the commanders who had distinguished themselves; and historians dwell particularly upon his visit to the tent of the English earl. His majesty consoled him for the loss of his teeth, by the consideration, that he might otherwise have been deprived of them by natural decay: whereas the lack of them would now be esteemed a beauty rather than a defect; serving as a trophy of the glorious cause in which he had been engaged.

The earl replied, "that he gave thanks to God and to the holy Virgin for being thus honoured by a visit from the most potent king in Christendom; that he accepted, with all gratitude, his gracious consolation for the loss he had sustained; though he held it little to lose two teeth in the service of God, who had given him all."

"A speech," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "full of most courtly wit and Christian piety; and one only marvels that it should be made by a native of an island so far distant from Castile."



CHAPTER XLI.

KING FERDINAND followed up his victory at Loxa by laying siege to the strong town of Illora. This redoubtable fortress was perched upon a high rock, in the midst of a spacious valley. It was within four leagues of the Moorish capital; and its lofty castle, keeping vigilant watch over a wide circuit of country, was termed the right eye of Granada.

The alcayde of Illora was one of the bravest of the Moorish commanders, and made every preparation to defend his fortress to the last extremity. He sent the women and children, the aged and infirm, to the metropolis. He placed barricadoes in the suburbs, opened doors of communication from house to house, and pierced their walls with loopholes, for the discharge of crossbows, arquebuses, and other missiles.

King Ferdinand arrived before the place with all his forces. He stationed himself upon the hill of Encinilla, and distributed the other encampments in various situations, so as to invest the fortress. Knowing the valiant character of the alcayde, and the desperate courage of the Moors, he ordered

the encampments to be fortified with trenches and palisadoes, the guards to be doubled, and sentinels to be placed in all the watchtowers of the adjacent heights.

When all was ready, the Duke del Infantado demanded the attack. It was his first campaign; and he was anxious to disprove the royal insinuation made against the hardihood of his embroidered chivalry. King Ferdinand granted his demand, with a becoming compliment to his spirit. He ordered the Count de Cabra to make a simultaneous attack upon a different quarter. Both chiefs led forth their troops. Those of the duke were in fresh and brilliant armour, richly ornamented, and as yet uninjured by the service of the field. Those of the count were weatherbeaten veterans, whose armour was dinted and hacked in many a hard fought battle. The youthful duke blushed at the contrast. "Cavaliers!" cried he, "we have been reproached with the finery of our arms: let us prove that a trenchant blade may rest in a gilded sheath. Forward! to the foe! and I trust in God, that, as we enter this affray knights well accoutred, so we shall leave it cavaliers well proved!" His men responded by eager acclamations, and the duke led them forward to the assault. He advanced under a tremendous shower of stones, darts, balls, and arrows; but nothing could check his career. He entered the suburb sword in hand; his men fought furiously, though with great loss; for every dwelling had been turned into a fortress. After a severe conflict, they succeeded in driving the Moors into the town, about the same time that the other suburb was carried by the Count de Cabra and his veterans. The troops of the Duke del Infantado came out of the contest thinned in number, and covered with blood, and dust, and wounds. They received the highest encomiums of the king; and there was never afterwards any sneer at their embroidery.

The suburbs being taken, three batteries, each furnished with eight large lombards, were opened upon the fortress. The damage and havock were tremendous; for the fortifications had not been constructed to withstand such engines. The towers were overthrown; the walls battered to pieces; the interior of the place was all exposed; houses demolished, and many people slain. The Moors were terrified by the tumbling ruins and the tremendous din. The alcayde had resolved to defend the place unto the last extremity. He be-

held it a heap of rubbish; there was no prospect of aid from Granada: his people had lost all spirit to fight, and were vociferous for a surrender. With a reluctant heart he capitulated. The inhabitants were permitted to depart with all their effects, excepting their arms; and were escorted in safety, by the Duke del Infantado and the Count de Cabra, to the bridge of Pinos, within two leagues of Granada.

King Ferdinand gave directions to repair the fortifications of Illora, and to place it in a strong state of defence. He left, as alcayde of the town and fortress, Gonzalvo de Cordova, younger brother of Don Alonzo de Aguilar. This gallant cavalier was captain of the royal guards of Ferdinand and Isabella, and gave already proofs of that prowess, which afterwards rendered him so renowned.

CHAPTER XLII.

The war of Granada, however poets may embroider it with the flowers of their fancy, was certainly one of the sternest of those iron conflicts, which have been celebrated under the name of holy wars. The worthy Fray Antonio Agapida dwells with unsated delight upon the succession of rugged mountain enterprises, bloody battles, and merciless sackings and ravages, which characterize it; yet we find him, on one occasion, pausing, in the full career of victory over the infidels, to detail a stately pageant of the Catholic sovereigns.

Immediately on the capture of Loxa, Ferdinand had written to Isabella, soliciting her presence at the camp, that he might consult with her as to the disposition of their newly acquired territories.

It was in the early part of June, that the queen departed from Cordova, with the Princess Isabella, and numerous ladies of her court. She had a glorious attendance of cavaliers and pages, with many guards and domestics. There were forty mules for the use of the queen, the princess, and their train.

As this courtly cavalcade approached the Rock of the Lovers, on the banks of the river Yeguas, they beheld a splendid train of knights advancing to meet them. It was headed by that accomplished cavalier, the Marquis Duke de Cadiz, accompanied by the adelantado of Andalusia. He had left the camp the day after the capture of Illora, and advanced

thus far to receive the queen, and escort her over the borders. The queen received the marquis with distinguished honour; for he was esteemed as the mirror of chivalry. His actions in this war had become the theme of every tongue, and many hesitated not to compare him in prowess to the immortal Cid.*

Thus gallantly attended, the queen entered the vanquished frontier of Granada, journeying securely along the pleasant banks of the Xenil, so lately subject to the scourings of the Moors. She stopped at Loxa, where she administered aid and consolation to the wounded, distributing money among them for their support, according to their rank.

The king, after the capture of Illora, had removed his camp before the fortress of Moclin, with an intention of besieging it. Thither the queen proceeded, still escorted through the mountain roads by the Marquis of Cadiz. As Isabella drew near to the camp, the Duke del Infantado issued forth a league and a half to receive her, magnificently arrayed, and followed by all his chivalry in glorious attire. With him came the standard of Seville, borne by the men-at-arms of that renowned city, and the prior of St. Juan, with his followers. They arranged themselves in order of battle, on the left of the road by which the queen was to pass. The worthy Agapida is loyally minute in his description of the state and grandeur of the Catholic sovereigns. The queen rode a chesnut mule, seated in a magnificent saddle chair, decorated with silver gilt. The housings of the mule were of fine crimson cloth; the borders embroidered with gold; the reins and head-piece were of satin, curiously embossed with needlework of silk, and wrought with golden letters. The queen wore a brial or royal skirt of velvet, under which were others of brocade; a scarlet mantle, ornamented in the moresco fashion, and a black hat embroidered round the crown and brim.

The Infanta was likewise mounted on a chesnut mule, richly caparisoned. She wore a brial or skirt of black brocade, and a black mantle, ornamented like that of the queen.

When the royal cavalcade passed by the chivalry of the Duke del Infantado, which was drawn out in battle array, the queen made a reverence to the standard of Seville, and ordered it to pass to the right hand. When she approached the camp, the multitude ran forth to meet her, with great

* Cura de los Palacios.

demonstrations of joy; for she was universally beloved by her subjects. All the battalions sallied forth in military array, bearing the various standards and banners of the camp, which were lowered in salutation as she passed.

The king now appeared, in royal state, mounted on a superb chesnut horse, and attended by many grandees of Castile. He wore a jubon or close vest of crimson cloth, with cuisses or short skirts of yellow satin; a loose cassock of brocade, a rich Moorish cimeter, and a hat with plumes. The grandees who attended him were arrayed with wonderful magnificence, each according to his taste and invention.

"These high and mighty princes," says Antonio Agapida, "regarded each other with great deference as allied sovereigns, rather than with connubial familiarity as mere husband and wife, when they approached each other: therefore, before embracing, they made three profound reverences; the queen, taking off her hat, and remaining in a silk net or cawl, with her face uncovered. The king then approached, and embraced her, and kissed her respectfully on the cheek. He also embraced his daughter the princess, and, making the sign of the cross, he blessed her, and kissed her on the lips."*

The good Agapida seems scarcely to have been more struck with the appearance of the sovereigns, than with that of the English earl. "He followed," says he, "immediately after the king, with great pomp, and in an extraordinary manner, taking precedence of all the rest. He was mounted, *à la guisa*, or with long stirrups, on a superb chesnut horse, with trappings of azure silk, which reached to the ground. The housings were of mulberry, powdered with stars of gold. He was armed in proof, and wore over his armour a short French mantle of black brocade. He had a white French hat with plumes; and carried on his left arm a small round buckler, banded with gold. Five pages attended him, apparelled in silk and brocade, and mounted on horses sumptuously caparisoned. He had also a train of followers, attired after the fashion of his country."

He advanced in a chivalrous and courteous manner, making his reverences first to the queen and Infanta, and afterwards to the king. Queen Isabella received him graciously, complimenting him on his courageous conduct at Loxa, and condoling with him on the loss of his teeth. The earl, however,

* Cura de los Palacios.

made light of his disfiguring wound; saying, that "our blessed Lord, who had built all that house, had opened a window there, that he might see more readily what passed within."* Whereupon, the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida is more than ever astonished at the pregnant wit of this island cavalier. The earl continued some little distance by the side of the royal family, complimenting them all with courteous speeches, his steed curveting and caracoling, but managed with great grace and dexterity, leaving the grandees and the people at large not more filled with admiration at the strangeness and magnificence of his state, than at the excellence of his horsemanship.†

To testify her sense of the gallantry and services of this noble English knight, who had come from so far to assist in their wars, the queen sent him, the next day, presents of twelve horses, with stately tents, fine linen, two beds, with coverings of gold brocade, and many other articles of great value.

Having refreshed himself, as it were, with the description of this progress of Queen Isabella to the camp, and the glorious pomp of the Catholic sovereigns, the worthy Antonio Agapida returns, with renewed relish, to his pious work of discomfiting the Moors.‡

CHAPTER XLIII.

"The Catholic sovereigns," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "had by this time closely clipped the right wing of the Moorish vulture." In other words, most of the strong fortresses along the western frontier of Granada had fallen beneath the Christian artillery. The army now lay encamped before the town of Moclin, on the frontier of Jaen, one of the most stubborn fortresses of the border. It stood on a high

* Pietro Martyr, Epist. 61. † Cura de los Palacios.

‡ The description of this royal pageant, and the particulars concerning the English earl, agree precisely with the chronicle of Andres Bernaldes, the curate of Los Palacios. The English earl makes no further figure in this war. It appears from various histories, that he returned in the course of the year to England. In the following year, his passion for fighting took him to the Continent, at the head of four hundred adventurers, in aid of Francis, Duke of Brittany, against Louis XI. of France. He was killed, in the same year (1488), in the battle of St. Alban's, between the Bretons and the French.

rocky hill, the base of which was nearly girdled by a river. A thick forest protected the back part of the town towards the mountain. Thus strongly situate, it domineered, with its frowning battlements and massive towers over all the mountain passes into that part of the country, and was called the Shield of Granada. It had a double arrear of blood to settle with the Christians. Two hundred years before, a master of Santiago and all his cavaliers had been lanced by the Moors before its gates. It had recently made terrible slaughter among the troops of the good Count de Cabra, in his precipitate attempt to entrap the old Moorish monarch. The pride of Ferdinand had been piqued, by being obliged, on that occasion, to recede from his plan, and abandon his concerted attack on the place. He was now prepared to take a full revenge.

El Zagal, the old warrior king of Granada, anticipating a second attempt, had provided the place with ample munitions and provision; had ordered trenches to be dug, and additional bulwarks thrown up, and caused all the old men, the women, and the children, to be removed to the capital.

Such was the strength of the fortress, and the difficulties of its position, that Ferdinand anticipated much trouble in reducing it, and made every preparation for a regular siege. In the centre of his camp were two great mounds, one of sacks of flour, the other of grain, which were called the royal granary. Three batteries of heavy ordnance were opened against the citadel and principal towers, while smaller artillery, engines for the discharge of missiles, arquebuses, and crossbows, were distributed in various places, to keep up a fire into any breach that might be made, and upon those of the garrison, who should appear on the battlements.

The lombards soon made an impression on the works, demolishing a part of the wall, and tumbling down several of those haughty towers, which, from their height, had been impregnable before the invention of gunpowder. The Moors repaired their walls as well as they were able, and, still confiding in the strength of their situation, kept up a resolute defence, firing down from their lofty battlements and towers upon the Christian camp. For two nights and a day an incessant fire was kept up, so that there was not a moment in which the roaring of ordnance was not heard, or some damage sustained by the Christians or the Moors. It was a conflict, however, more of engineers and artillerists than of gallant

cavaliers; there was no sally of troops, or shock of armed men, or rush and charge of cavalry. The knights stood looking on with idle weapons, waiting until they should have an opportunity of signalizing their prowess, by scaling the walls or storming the breaches. As the place, however, was assailable only in one part, there was every prospect of a long and obstinate resistance.

The engines, as usual, discharged not only balls of stone and iron, to demolish the walls, but flaming balls of inextinguishable combustibles, designed to set fire to the houses. One of these, which passed high through the air, like a meteor, sending out sparks, and crackling as it went, entered the window of a tower, which was used as a magazine of gunpowder. The tower blew up with a tremendous explosion; the Moors, who were upon its battlements, were hurled into the air, and fell mangled in various parts of the town; and the houses in its vicinity were rent and overthrown, as with an earthquake.

The Moors, who had never witnessed an explosion of this kind, ascribed the destruction of the tower to a miracle. Some who had seen the descent of the flaming ball, imagined that fire had fallen from heaven, to punish them for their pertinacity. The pious Agapida himself believes, that this fiery missive was conducted by divine agency, to confound the infidels. An opinion in which he is supported by other Catholic historians.*

Seeing heaven and earth as it were combined against them, the Moors lost all heart, and capitulated; and were permitted to depart with their effects, leaving behind all arms and munitions of war.

"The Catholic army," says Antonio Agapida, "entered Moclin in solemn state, not as a licentious host, intent upon plunder and desolation, but as a band of Christian warriors, coming to purify and regenerate the land. The standard of the cross, that ensign of this holy crusade, was borne in the advance, followed by the other banners of the army. Then came the king and queen, at the head of a vast number of armed cavaliers. They were accompanied by a band of priests and friars, with the choir of the royal chapel, chanting the canticle *Te Deum laudamus*. As they were moving through the

* Pulgar. Garibay. Lucio Marino Siculo, Cosas. Memorab. de Hispan. lib. xx.

streets in this solemn manner, every sound hushed, excepting the anthem of the choir, they suddenly heard, issuing as it were from under ground, a chorus of voices, chanting the solemn response, *Benedictum qui venit in nomine Domini.** The procession paused in wonder. The sounds arose from Christian captives, and among them several priests, who were confined in subterraneous dungeons.

The heart of Isabella was greatly touched; she ordered the captives to be drawn forth from their cells, and was still more moved at beholding, by their wan, discoloured, and emaciated appearance, how much they had suffered. Their hair and beards were overgrown and shagged; they were wasted by hunger, and were half naked, and in chains. She ordered, that they should be clothed and cherished, and money furnished them to bear them to their homes.†

Several of the captives were brave cavaliers, who had been wounded and made prisoners, in the defeat of the Count de Cabra, by El Zagal, in the preceding year. There were also found other melancholy traces of that disastrous affair. On visiting the narrow pass, where the defeat had taken place, the remains of several Christian warriors were found in thickets, or hidden behind rocks, or in the clefts of the mountains. There were some, who had been struck from their horses, and wounded too severely to fly. They had crawled away from the scene of action, and concealed themselves, to avoid falling into the hands of the enemy, and had thus perished miserably and alone. The remains of those of note were known by their armour and devices, and were mourned over by their companions, who had shared the disasters of that day.‡

The queen had these remains piously collected, as the relics of so many martyrs, who had fallen in the cause of the faith. They were interred, with great solemnity, in the mosques of Moclin, which had been purified, and consecrated to Christian worship. "There," says Antonio Agapida, "rest the bones of those truly Catholic knights, in the holy ground, which, in a manner, has been sanctified by their blood; and all pilgrims, passing through those mountains, offer up prayers and masses for the repose of their souls."

* Marino Siculo.
† Illescas, Hist. Pontiff. lib. vi. c. 20, sect. 21.
‡ Pulgar, part iii. cap. 61.

The queen remained for some time at Moclin, administering comfort to the wounded and the prisoners, bringing the newly-acquired territory into order, and founding churches and monasteries, and other pious institutions. "While the king marched in front, laying waste the land of the Philistines," says the figurative Antonio Agapida, "Queen Isabella followed his traces, as the binder follows the reaper, gathering the rich harvest that has fallen beneath his sickle. In this she was greatly assisted by the councils of that cloud of bishops, friars, and clergymen, besides other saintly personages, which continually surrounded her, garnering the first fruits of this infidel land into the granaries of the church." Leaving her thus piously employed, the king pursued his career of conquest, determined to lay waste the vega, and carry fire and sword to the very gates of Granada.

CHAPTER XLIV.

MULEY ABDALLA EL ZAGAL had been under a spell of ill fortune, ever since the suspicious death of the old king his brother. Success had deserted his standard, and, with his fickle subjects, want of success was one of the greatest crimes in a sovereign. He found his popularity declining, and he lost all confidence in his people. The Christian army marched in open defiance through his territories, and sat down deliberately before his fortressses; yet he dared not lead forth his legions to oppose them, lest the inhabitants of the albaycin, ever ripe for a revolt, should rise, and shut the gates of Granada against his return.

Every few days some melancholy train entered the metropolis, the inhabitants of some captured town, bearing the few effects that had been spared them, and weeping and bewailing the desolation of their homes. When the tidings arrived, that Illora and Moclin had fallen, the people were seized with consternation. "The right eye of Granada is extinguished!" exclaimed they; "the shield of Granada is broken! what shall protect us from the inroad of the foe?" When the survivors of the garrisons of those towns arrived, with downcast looks, bearing the marks of battle, and destitute of arms and standards, the populace reviled them in their wrath: but they answered, "We fought as long as we had force to fight, or walls to shelter us; but the Christians

laid our towers and battlements in ruins, and we looked in vain for aid from Granada."

The alcaydes of Illora and Moclin were brothers; they were alike in prowess, and the bravest among the Moorish cavaliers. They had been the most distinguished in all tilts and tourneys, which graced the happier days of Granada, and had distinguished themselves in the sterner conflicts of the field. Acclamation had always followed their banners, and they had long been the delight of the people. Now, when they returned, after the capture of their fortresses, they were followed by the unsteady populace with execrations. The hearts of the alcaydes swelled with indignation; they found the ingratitude of their countrymen still more intolerable than the hostility of the Christians. Tidings came, that the enemy was advancing with his triumphant legions, to lay waste the country about Granada. Still El Zagal did not dare to take the field. The two alcaydes of Illora and Moclin stood before him. "We have defended your fortresses," said they, "until we were almost buried under their ruins; and for our reward, we receive scoffs and revilings. Give us, O king, an opportunity in which knightly valour may signalize itself; not shut up behind stone walls, but in the open conflict of the field! The enemy approaches, to lay our country desolate. Give us men to meet him in the advance; and let shame light upon our heads if we be found wanting in the battle!"

The two brothers were sent forth with a large force of horse and foot. El Zagal intended, should they be successful, to issue out with his whole force; and, by a decisive victory, repair the losses he had suffered. When the people saw the well-known standards of the brothers going forth to battle, there was a feeble shout; but the alcaydes passed on with stern countenances; for they knew the same voices would curse them were they to return unfortunate. They cast a farewell look upon fair Granada, and upon the beautiful fields of their infancy, as if for these they were willing to lay down their lives, but not for an ungrateful people.

The army of Ferdinand had arrived within two leagues of Granada, at the bridge of Pinos, a pass famous in the wars of the Moors and Christians for many a bloody conflict. It was the pass by which the Castilian monarchs generally made their inroads, and was capable of great defence, from the

ruggedness of the country, and the difficulty of the bridge. The king, with the main body of the army, had attained the brow of a hill, when they beheld the advanced guard, under the Marquis of Cadiz and the master of Santiago, furiously attacked by the enemy, in the vicinity of the bridge. The Moors rushed to the assault with their usual shouts, but with more than usual ferocity.

There was a hard struggle at the bridge, both parties knowing the importance of the pass. The king particularly noted the prowess of two Moorish cavaliers, alike in arms and devices, and who, by their bearing and attendance, he perceived to be commanders of the enemy. They were the two brothers, the alcaydes of Illora and Moclin. Wherever they turned, they carried confusion and death into the ranks of the Christians; but they fought with desperation rather than valour. The Count de Cabra and his brother, Don Martin de Cordova, pressed forward with eagerness against them; but, having advanced too precipitately, were surrounded by the foe, and in imminent danger. A young Christian knight, seeing their peril, hastened with his followers to their relief. The king recognized him for Don Juan de Arragon, Count of Ribargoza, his own nephew; for he was illegitimate son of the Duke of Villahermosa, illegitimate brother of King Ferdinand. The splendid armour of Don Juan, and the sumptuous caparison of his steed, rendered him a brilliant object of attack. He was assailed on all sides, and his superb steed slain under him; yet still he fought valiantly, bearing for a while the brunt of the fight, and giving the exhausted forces of the Count de Cabra time to recover breath.

Seeing the peril of these troops, and the general obstinacy of the contest, the king ordered the royal standard to be advanced, and hastened with all his forces to the relief of the Count de Cabra. At his approach, the enemy gave way, and retreated towards the bridge. The two Moorish commanders endeavoured to rally their troops, and animate them to defend this pass to the utmost. They used prayers, remonstrances, menaces; but nearly in vain. They could only collect a scanty handful of cavaliers. With these they planted themselves at the head of the bridge, and disputed it inch by inch. The fight was hot and obstinate; for but few could contend hand to hand, yet many discharged crossbows and arquebuses

from the banks. The river was covered with the floating bodies of the slain. The Moorish band of cavaliers was almost entirely cut to pieces; the two brothers fell, covered with wounds, upon the bridge they had so resolutely defended. They had given up the battle for lost, but had determined not to return alive to ungrateful Granada. When the people of the capital heard how devotedly they had fallen, they lamented greatly their deaths, and extolled their memory. A column was erected to their honour in the vicinity of the bridge, which long went by the name of "the tomb of the brothers."

The army of Ferdinand now marched on, and established its camp in the vicinity of Granada. The worthy Agapida gives many triumphant details of the ravages committed in the vega, which was again laid waste; the grain, fruits, and other productions of the earth destroyed, and that earthly Paradise rendered a dreary desert. He narrates several fierce but ineffectual sallies and skirmishes of the Moors in defence of their favourite plain; among which, one deserves to be mentioned, as it records the achievement of one of the saintly heroes of this war.

During one of the movements of the Christian army near the walls of Granada, a battalion of fifteen hundred cavalry, and a large force of foot, had sallied from the city, and posted themselves near some gardens, which were surrounded by a canal, and traversed by ditches, for the purpose of irrigation.

The Moors beheld the Duke del Infantado pass by with his two splendid battalions, one of men at arms, the other of light cavalry, armed *à la geneta*. In company with him, but following as a rearguard, was Don Garcia Osorio, the belligerent Bishop of Jaen, attended by Francisco Boradillo, the corregidor of his city, and followed by two squadrons of men-at-arms from Jaen, Andujar, Ubeda, and Baza.* The success of the preceding year's campaign had given the good bishop an inclination for warlike affairs, and he had once more buckled on his cuirass.

The Moors were much given to stratagem in warfare. They looked wistfully at the magnificent squadrons of the Duke del Infantado; but their martial discipline precluded all attack. The good bishop promised to be a more easy prey. Suffering the duke and his troops to pass unmolested, they approached

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 62.

the squadrons of the bishop, and making a pretended attack, skirmished slightly, and fled in apparent confusion. The bishop considered the day his own, and, seconded by his corregidor, Bovadillo, followed with valorous precipitation. The Moors fled into the *Huerta del Rey*, or orchard of the king. The troops of the bishop followed hotly after them. When the Moors perceived their pursuers fairly embarrassed among the intricacies of the garden, they turned fiercely upon them, while some of their number threw open the sluices of the Xenil. In an instant the canal which encircled, and the ditches which traversed the garden, were filled with water, and the valiant bishop and his followers found themselves overwhelmed by a deluge.* A scene of great confusion succeeded. Some of the men of Jaen, stoutest of heart and hand, fought with the Moors in the garden, while others struggled with the water, endeavouring to escape across the canal, in which attempt many horses were drowned. Fortunately, the Duke del Infantado perceived the snare into which his companions had fallen, and despatched his light cavalry to their assistance. The Moors were compelled to fly, and driven along the road of Elvira up to the gates of Granada. Several Christian cavaliers perished in this affray; the bishop himself escaped with difficulty, having slipped from his saddle in crossing the canal, but saved himself by holding on to the tail of his charger. This perilous achievement seems to have satisfied the good bishop's belligerent propensities. "He retired on his laurels," says Agapida, "to his city of Jaen, where, on the fruition of all good things, he gradually waxed too corpulent for his corslet, which was hung up in the hall of his episcopal palace; and we hear no more of his military deeds throughout the residue of the holy war of Granada."†

King Ferdinand having completed his ravage of the vega, and kept El Zagal shut up in his capital, conducted his army back through the pass of Lope, to rejoin Queen Isabella at Moclin. The fortresses lately taken being well garrisoned and supplied, he gave the command of the frontier to his cousin, Don Fadrique de Toledo, afterwards so famous in the

* Pulgar.

† Don Luis Osorio fué obispo de Jaen desde el año de 1483, y presidió en esta iglesia harta el de 1496 en que murió en Flandes á donde fué acompañando á la Princesa Doña Juana, esposa del Archiduque Don Felipe.—España Sagrada. Por Fr. M. Risco, tom. xli. trat. 77. cap. 4.

Netherlands as the Duke of Alva. The campaign being thus completely crowned with success, the sovereigns returned in triumph to the city of Cordova.

CHAPTER XLV.

No sooner did the last squadron of Christian cavalry disappear behind the mountain of Elvira, and the note of its trumpets die away upon the ear, than the long suppressed wrath of old Muley el Zagal burst forth. He determined no longer to be half a king, reigning over a divided kingdom, in a divided capital, but to exterminate, by any means, fair or foul, his nephew Boabdil and his confederates. He turned furiously upon those whose factious conduct had deterred him from sallying upon the foe. Some he punished by confiscation, others by banishment, others by death. Once undisputed monarch of the entire kingdom, he trusted to his military skill to retrieve his fortune, and drive the Christians over the frontier.

Boabdil, however, had again retired to Velez el Blanco, on the confines of Murcia, where he could avail himself, in case of emergency, of any assistance or protection afforded him by the policy of Ferdinand. His defeat had blighted his reviving fortunes, for the people considered him as inevitably doomed to misfortune. Still, while he lived, El Zagal knew he would be a rallying point for faction, and liable, at any moment, to be elevated into power by the capricious multitude. He had recourse, therefore, to the most perfidious means to compass his destruction. He sent ambassadors to him, representing the necessity of concord for the salvation of the kingdom, and even offering to resign the title of king, and to become subject to his sway, on receiving some estate, on which he could live in tranquil retirement. But, while the ambassadors bore these words of peace, they were furnished with poisoned herbs, which they were to administer secretly to Boabdil; and, if they failed in this attempt, they had pledged themselves to despatch him openly, while engaged in conversation. They were instigated to this treason by promises of great reward, and by assurances from the alfaquis, that Boabdil was an apostate, whose death would be acceptable to heaven.

The young monarch was secretly apprized of the concerted

treason, and refused an audience to the ambassadors. He denounced his uncle as the murderer of his father and his kindred, and the usurper of his throne, and vowed never to relent in hostility to him, until he should place his head on the walls of the Alhambra.

Open war again broke out between the two monarchs, though feebly carried on, in consequence of their mutual embarrassments. Ferdinand again extended his assistance to Boabdil, ordering the commanders of his fortresses to aid him in all enterprises against his uncle, and against such places as refused to acknowledge him as king. And Don Juan de Benavides, who commanded in Loxa, even made inroads, in his name, into the territories of Almeria, Baza, and Guadix, which owned allegiance to El Zagal.

The unfortunate Boabdil had three great evils to contend with; the inconstancy of his subjects, the hostility of his uncle, and the friendship of Ferdinand. The last was by far the most baneful; his fortunes withered under it. He was looked upon as the enemy of his faith and of his country. The cities shut their gates against him. The people cursed him. Even the scanty band of cavaliers, who had hitherto followed his ill starred banner, began to desert him; for he had not wherewithal to reward, or even to support them. His spirit sank with his fortune; and he feared that, in a little time, he should not have a spot of earth whereon to place his standard, or an adherent to rally under it.

In the midst of his despondency, he received a message from his lion-hearted mother, the sultana Ayxa la Horra. "For shame," said she, "to linger about the borders of your kingdom, when a usurper is seated in your capital! Why look abroad for perfidious aid, when you have loyal hearts beating true to you in Granada? The albaycin is ready to throw open its gates to receive you. Strike home vigorously. A sudden blow may mend all, or make an end. A throne, or a grave! for a king, there is no honourable medium."

Boabdil was of an undecided character: but there are circumstances which bring the most wavering to a decision, and, when once resolved, they are apt to act with a daring impulse, unknown to steadier judgments. The message of the sultana roused him from a dream. Granada, beautiful Granada! with its stately Alhambra, its delicious gardens, its gushing and limpid fountains, sparkling among groves of

orange, citron, and myrtle, rose before him. "What have I done," exclaimed he, "that I should be an exile from this paradise of my forefathers, a wanderer and fugitive in my own kingdom, while a murderous usurper sits proudly upon my throne? Surely, Allah will befriend the righteous cause: one blow, and all may be my own!"

He summoned his scanty band of cavaliers. "Who is ready to follow his monarch unto the death?" said he; and every one laid his hand upon his cimeter. "Enough!" said he: "let each man arm himself, and prepare his steed in secret, for an enterpise of toil and peril: if we succeed, our reward is empire!"

CHAPTER XLV.*

"In the hand of God," exclaims an old Arabian chronicler, "is the destiny of princes: he alone giveth empire. A single Moorish horseman, mounted on a fleet Arabian steed, was one day traversing the mountains which extend between Granada and the frontiers of Murcia. He galloped swiftly through the valleys, but paused and looked out cautiously from the summit of every height. A squadron of cavaliers followed warily at a distance. There were fifty lances. The richness of their armour and attire showed them to be warriors of noble rank, and their leader had a lofty and prince-like demeanour." The squadron thus described by the Arabian chronicler was the Moorish king Boabdil and his devoted followers.

For two nights and a day they pursued their adventurous journey, avoiding all populous parts of the country, and choosing the most solitary passes of the mountains. They suffered severe hardships and fatigues; but they suffered without a murmur. They were accustomed to rugged campaigning, and their steeds were of generous and unyielding spirit. It was midnight, and all was dark and silent, as they descended from the mountains, and approached the city of Granada. They passed along quietly under the shadow of its walls, until they arrived near the gate of the albaycin. Here Boabdil ordered his followers to halt, and remain concealed. Taking but four or five with him, he advanced resolutely to the gate, and knocked with the hilt of his cimeter. The guards demanded who sought to enter at that unseasonable

hour. "Your king!" exclaimed Boabdil: "open the gate, and admit him."

The guards held forth a light, and recognised the person of the youthful monarch. They were struck with sudden awe, and threw open the gates, and Boabdil and his followers entered unmolested. They galloped to the dwellings of the principal inhabitants of the albaycin; thundering at their portals, and summoning them to rise, and take arms for their rightful sovereign. The summons was instantly obeyed; trumpets resounded throughout the streets; the gleam of torches and the flash of arms showed the Moors hurrying to their gathering places; and by daybreak the whole force of the albaycin was rallied under the standard of Boabdil. Such was the success of this sudden and desperate act of the young monarch: for we are assured by contemporary historians, that there had been no previous concert or arrangement. "As the guards opened the gate of the city to admit him," observes a pious chronicler, "so God opened the hearts of the Moors to receive him as their king."*

In the morning, early, the tidings of this event roused El Zagal from his slumbers in the Alhambra. The fiery old warrior assembled his guard in haste, and made his way, sword in hand, to the albaycin, hoping to come upon his nephew by surprise. He was vigorously met by Boabdil and his adherents, and driven back into the quarter of the Alhambra. An encounter took place between the two kings in the square before the principal mosque. Here they fought, hand to hand, with implacable fury, as though it had been agreed to decide their competition for the crown by single combat. In the tumult of this chance medley affray, however, they were separated, and the party of El Zagal was ultimately driven from the square.

The battle raged for some time in the streets and places of the city; but, finding their powers of mischief cramped within such narrow limits, both parties sallied forth into the fields, and fought beneath the walls until evening. Many fell on both sides; and at night each party withdrew into its quarter, until the morning gave them light to renew the unnatural conflict. For several days the two divisions of the city remained like hostile powers arrayed against each other. The party of the Alhambra was more numerous than that of

* Pulgar.

the albaycin, and contained most of the nobility and chivalry; but the adherents of Boabdil were men hardened and strengthened by labour, and habitually skilled in the exercise of arms.

The albaycin underwent a kind of siege by the forces of El Zagal: they effected breaches in the walls, and made repeated attempts to carry it sword in hand, but were as often repulsed. The troops of Boabdil, on the other hand, made frequent sallies; and, in the conflicts which took place, the hatred of the combatants rose to such a pitch of fury, that no quarter was given on either side.

Boabdil perceived the inferiority of his force. He dreaded also that his adherents, being for the most part tradesmen and artisans, would become impatient of this interruption of their gainful occupations, and disheartened by these continual scenes of carnage. He sent missives, therefore, in all haste, to Don Fadrique de Toledo, who commanded the Christian forces on the frontier, entreating his assistance.

Don Fadrique had received orders from the politic Ferdinand to aid the youthful monarch in all his contests with his uncle. He advanced, therefore, with a body of troops near to Granada; but, wary lest some treachery might be intended, he stood for some time aloof, watching the movements of the parties. The furious and sanguinary nature of the conflicts, which distracted unhappy Granada, soon convinced him that there was no collusion between the monarchs. He sent Boabdil, therefore, a reinforcement of Christian foot soldiers and arquebusiers, under Fernan Alvarez de Sotomayor, alcayde of Colomara. This was as a fire brand thrown in to light up anew the flames of war in the city, which remained raging between the Moorish inhabitants for the space of fifty days.

CHAPTER XLVI.

HITHERTO the events of this renowned war have been little else than a succession of brilliant but brief exploits, such as sudden forays and wild skirmishes among the mountains, or the surprisals of castles, fortresses, and frontier towns. We approach now to more important and prolonged operations, in which ancient and mighty cities, the bulwarks of Granada, were invested by powerful armies, subdued by

slow and regular sieges, and thus the capital left naked and alone.

The glorious triumphs of the Catholic sovereigns, says Fray Antonio Agapida, had resounded throughout the East, and filled all heathenesse with alarm. The Grand Turk, Bajazet II., and his deadly foe the Grand Soldan of Egypt, suspending for a time their bloody feuds, entered into a league to protect the religion of Mahomet and the kingdom of Granada from the hostilities of the Christians. It was concerted between them, that Bajazet should send a powerful armada against the island of Sicily, then appertaining to the Spanish crown, for the purpose of distracting the attention of the Castilian sovereigns, while, at the same time, great bodies of troops should be poured into Granada from the opposite coast of Africa.

Ferdinand and Isabella received timely intelligence of these designs. They resolved at once to carry the war into the seabord of Granada, to possess themselves of its ports, and thus, as it were, to bar the gates of the kingdom against all external aid. Malaga was to be the main object of attack: it was the principal seaport of the kingdom, and almost necessary to its existence. It had long been the seat of opulent commerce, sending many ships to the coasts of Syria and Egypt. It was also the great channel of communication with Africa, through which were introduced supplies of money, troops, arms, and steeds, from Tunis, Tripoli, Fez, Tremezan, and other Barbary powers. It was emphatically called, therefore, the Hand and Mouth of Granada.

Before laying siege to this redoubtable city, however, it was deemed necessary to secure the neighbouring city of Velez Malaga, and its dependent places, which might otherwise harass the besieging army.

For this important campaign, the nobles of the kingdom were again summoned to take the field with their forces, in the spring of 1487. The menaced invasion of the infidel powers of the East had awakened new ardour in the bosoms of all true Christian knights, and so zealously did they respond to the summons of the sovereigns, that an army of twenty thousand cavalry, and fifty thousand foot, the flower of Spanish warriors led by the bravest of Spanish cavaliers, thronged the renowned city of Cordova at the appointed time.

On the night before this mighty host set forth upon its

march, an earthquake shook the city. The inhabitants, awakened by the shaking of the walls and rocking of the towers, fled to the courts and squares, fearing to be overwhelmed by the ruins of their dwellings. The earthquake was most violent in the quarter of the royal residence, the site of the ancient palace of the Moorish kings. Many looked upon this as an omen of some impending evil, but Fray Antonio Agapida, in that infallible spirit of divination which succeeds an event, plainly reads in it a presage, that the empire of the Moors was about to be shaken to its centre.

It was on Saturday, the eve of the Sunday of Palms, says a worthy and loyal chronicler of the times, that the most Catholic monarch departed with his army to render service to heaven, and make war upon the Moors.* Heavy rains had swelled all the streams, and rendered the roads deep and difficult. The king, therefore, divided his host into two bodies. In one he put all the artillery, guarded by a strong body of horse, and commanded by the master of Alcantara, and Martin Alonzo, senior of Montemayor. This division was to proceed by the road through the valleys, where pasturage abounded for the oxen which drew the ordnance.

The main body of the army was led by the king in person. It was divided into numerous battalions, each commanded by some distinguished cavalier. The king took the rough and perilous road of the mountains; and few mountains are more rugged and difficult than those of Andalusia. The roads are mere mule-paths, straggling amidst rocks and along the verge of precipices, clambering vast craggy heights, or descending into frightful chasms and ravines, with scanty and uncertain foothold for either man or steed. Four thousand pioneers were sent in advance, under the alcayde de los Donzeles, to conquer, in some degree, the asperities of the road. Some had pickaxes and crows, to break the rocks; some implements to construct bridges over the mountain torrents; while it was the duty of others to lay stepping-stones in the smaller streams. As the country was inhabited by fierce Moorish mountaineers, Don Diego de Castrillo was despatched, with a body of horse and foot, to take possession of the heights and passes. Notwithstanding every precaution, the royal army suffered excessively on its march. At one time, there was no place to encamp for five leagues of the most

* Pulgar Cronica de los Reyes Catholicos.

toilsome and mountainous country, and many of the beasts of burden sank down and perished on the road.

It was with the greatest joy, therefore, that the royal army emerged from these stern and frightful defiles, and came to where they looked down upon the vega of Velez Malaga. The region before them was one of the most delectable to the eye that ever was ravaged by an army. Sheltered from every rude blast by a screen of mountains, and sloping and expanding to the south, this lovely valley was quickened by the most generous sunshine, watered by the silver meanderings of the Velez, and refreshed by cooling breezes from the Mediterranean. The sloping hills were covered with vineyards and olive-trees, the distant fields waved with grain, or were verdant with pasturage, while around the city were delightful gardens, the favourite retreats of the Moors, where their white pavilions gleamed among groves of oranges, citrons, and pomegranates, and were surmounted by stately palms, those plants of southern growth, bespeaking a generous climate and a cloudless sky.

In the upper part of this delightful valley, the city of Velez Malaga reared its warrior battlements, in stern contrast to the landscape. It was built on the declivity of a steep and insulated hill, and strongly fortified by walls and towers. The crest of the hill rose high above the town into a mere crag, inaccessible on every other side, and crowned by a powerful castle, which domineered over the surrounding country. Two suburbs swept down into the valley, from the skirts of the town, and were defended by bulwarks and deep ditches. The vast ranges of gray mountains, often capped with clouds, which rose to the north, were inhabited by a hardy and warlike race, whose strong fortresses of Comares, Camillas, Competa, and Benemarhorga, frowned down from cragged heights.

At the time that the Christian host arrived in sight of this valley, a squadron was hovering on the smooth sea before it, displaying the banner of Castile. This was commanded by the Count of Trevento, and consisted of four armed galleys, convoying a number of caravels, laden with supplies for the army.

After surveying the ground, King Ferdinand encamped on the side of a mountain, which advanced close to the city, and was the last of a rugged sierra, or chain of heights, that

extended quite to Granada. On the summit of this mountain, and overlooking the camp, was a Moorish town, powerfully fortified, called Bentomiz, and which, from its vicinity, had been considered capable of yielding great assistance to Velez Malaga. Several of the generals remonstrated with the king for choosing a post so exposed to assaults from the mountaineers. Ferdinand replied, that he should thus cut off all communication between the town and the city; and that, as to the danger, his soldiers must keep the more vigilant guard against surprise.

King Ferdinand rode forth, attended by several cavaliers, and a small number of cuirassiers, appointing the various stations of the camp. While a body of foot soldiers were taking possession, as an advanced guard, of an important height which overlooked the city, the king retired to a tent to take refreshment. While at table, he was startled by a sudden uproar, and, looking forth, beheld his soldiers flying before a superior force of the enemy. The king had on no other armour but a cuirass. Seizing a lance, however, he sprang upon his horse, and galloped to protect the fugitives, followed by his handful of knights and cuirassiers. When the Spaniards saw the king hastening to their aid, they turned upon their pursuers. Ferdinand, in his eagerness, threw himself into the midst of the foe. One of his grooms was killed beside him; but before the Moor who slew him could escape, the king transfixed him with his lance. He then sought to draw his sword, which hung at his saddle-bow, but in vain. Never had he been exposed to such peril: he was surrounded by the enemy, without a weapon wherewith to defend himself.

In this moment of awful jeopardy, the Marquis of Cadiz, the Count de Cabra, the Adelantado of Murcia, with two other cavaliers, named Garcilasso de la Vega and Diego de Atayde, came galloping to the scene of action, and, surrounding the king, made a loyal rampart of their bodies against the assaults of the Moors. The horse of the marquis was pierced by an arrow, and that worthy cavalier exposed to imminent danger: but, with the aid of his valorous companions, he quickly put the enemy to flight, and pursued them with slaughter to the very gates of the city.

When these loyal warriors returned from the pursuit, they remonstrated with the king for exposing his life in personal

conflicts, seeing that he had so many valiant captains, whose business it was to fight. They reminded him, that the life of a prince was the life of his people, and that many a brave army was lost by the loss of its commander. They entreated him, therefore, in future to protect them with the force of his mind in the cabinet, rather than of his arm in the field.

Ferdinand acknowledged the wisdom of their advice, but declared, that he could not see his people in peril without venturing his person to assist them: a reply, say the old chroniclers, which delighted the whole army, inasmuch as they saw, that he not only governed them as a good king, but protected them as a valiant captain. Ferdinand, however, was conscious of the extreme peril to which he had been exposed, and made a vow never again to venture into battle without having his sword girt to his side.*

When this achievement of the king was related to Isabella, she trembled amidst her joy at his safety; and afterwards, in memorial of the event, she granted to Velez Malaga, as the arms of the city, the figure of the king on horseback, with a groom lying dead at his feet, and the Moors flying †

The camp was formed, but the artillery was yet on the road, advancing with infinite labour at the rate of merely a league a day; for heavy rains had converted the streams of the valleys into raging torrents, and completely broken up the roads. In the meantime King Ferdinand ordered an assault on the suburbs of the city. They were carried, after a sanguinary conflict of six hours, in which many Christian cavaliers were killed and wounded, and among the latter Don Alvaro of Portugal, son of the Duke of Braganza. The suburbs were then fortified towards the city with trenches and palisades, and garrisoned by a chosen force under Don Fadrique de Toledo. Other trenches were dug round the city, and from the suburbs to the royal camp, so as to cut off all communication with the surrounding country.

Bodies of troops were also sent to take possession of the mountain passes, by which the supplies for the army had to be brought. The mountains, however, were so steep and rugged, and so full of defiles and lurking places, that the Moors could sally forth and retreat in perfect security, frequently sweeping down upon Christian convoys, and bearing

* Illescas, Hist. Pontif. lib. vi. c. 20. Vedmar, Hist. Velez Malaga.
† Idem.

off both booty and prisoners to their strong-holds. Sometimes the Moors would light fires at night on the sides of the mountains, which would be answered by fires from the watch-towers and fortresses. By these signals they would concert assaults upon the Christian camp, which, in consequence, was obliged to be continually on the alert, and ready to fly to arms.

King Ferdinand flattered himself, that the manifestation of his force had struck sufficient terror into the city, and that, by offers of clemency, it might be induced to capitulate. He wrote a letter, therefore, to the commanders, promising, in case of immediate surrender, that all the inhabitants should be permitted to depart with their effects; but threatening them with fire and sword if they persisted in defence. This letter was despatched by a cavalier, named Carvajal, who, putting it on the end of a lance, gave it to the Moors who were on the walls of the city. The commanders replied, that the king was too noble and magnanimous to put such a threat in execution, and that they should not surrender, as they knew the artillery could not be brought to the camp, and they were promised succour by the king of Granada.

At the same time that he received this reply, the king learned, that at the strong town of Comares, upon a height about two leagues distant from the camp, a large number of warriors had assembled from the Axarquia, the same mountains in which the Christian cavaliers had been massacred in the beginning of the war; and that others were daily expected, for this rugged sierra was capable of furnishing fifteen thousand fighting men.

King Ferdinand felt that his army, thus disjointed and enclosed in an enemy's country, was in a perilous situation, and that the utmost discipline and vigilance were necessary. He put the camp under the strictest regulations, forbidding all gaming, blasphemy, or brawl, and expelling all loose women, and their attendant bully-ruffians, the usual fomenters of riot and contention among soldiery. He ordered, that none should sally forth to skirmish without permission from their commanders; that none should set fire to the woods on the neighbouring mountains, and that all word of security given to Moorish places or individuals should be inviolably observed. These regulations were enforced by severe penalties, and had such salutary effect, that, though a vast host of various people

were collected together, not an opprobrious epithet was heard, nor a weapon drawn in quarrel.

In the meantime the cloud of war went on gathering about the summits of the mountains; multitudes of the fierce warriors of the sierra descended to the lower heights of Bentomiz, which overhung the camp, intending to force their way into the city. A detachment was sent against them, which, after sharp fighting, drove them to the higher cliffs of the mountain, where it was impossible to pursue them.

Ten days had elapsed since the encampment of the army, yet still the artillery had not arrived. The lombards and other heavy ordnance were left, in despair, at Antequera; the rest came groaning slowly through the narrow valleys, which were filled with long trains of artillery and cars laden with munitions. At length part of the smaller ordnance arrived within half a league of the camp, and the Christians were animated with the hopes of soon being able to make a regular attack upon the fortifications of the city.

CHAPTER XLVII.

WHILE the standard of the cross waved on the hills before Velez Malaga, and every height and cliff bristled with hostile arms, the civil war between the factions of the Alhambra and the Albaycin, or rather between El Zagal and El Chico, continued to convulse the city of Granada.

The tidings of the investment of Velez Malaga at length roused the attention of the old men and the alfaquis, whose heads were not heated by the daily broils. They spread themselves through the city, and endeavoured to arouse the people to a sense of their common danger.

"Why," said they, "continue these brawls between brethren and kindred? What battles are these, where even triumph is ignominious, and the victor blushes and conceals his scars? Behold the Christians ravaging the land won by the valour and blood of your forefathers, dwelling in the houses they have built, sitting under the trees they have planted, while your brethren wander about, houseless and desolate. Do you wish to seek your real foe? He is encamped on the mountain of Bentomiz. Do you want a field for the display of your valour? You will find it before the walls of Velez Malaga."

When they had roused the spirit of the people, they made their way to the rival kings, and addressed them with like remonstrances. Hamet Aben Zarrex, the inspired santon, reproached El Zagal with his blind and senseless ambition. "You are striving to be king," said he bitterly, "yet suffer the kingdom to be lost."

El Zagal found himself in a perplexing dilemma. He had a double war to wage, with the enemy without and the enemy within. Should the Christians gain possession of the seacoast, it would be ruinous to the kingdom; should he leave Granada to oppose them, his vacant throne might be seized on by his nephew. He made a merit of necessity, and pretending to yield to the remonstrances of the alfaquis, endeavoured to compromise with Boabdil. He expressed deep concern at the daily losses of the country, caused by the dissensions of the capital; an opportunity now presented itself to retrieve all by a blow. The Christians had, in a manner, put themselves in a tomb between the mountains; nothing remained but to throw the earth upon them. He offered to resign the title of king, to submit to the government of his nephew, and fight under his standard; all he desired was to hasten to the relief of Velez Malaga, and to take full vengeance on the Christians.

Boabdil spurned his proposition as the artifice of a hypocrite and a traitor. "How shall I trust a man," said he, "who has murdered my father and my kindred by treachery, and repeatedly sought my own life, both by violence and stratagem?"

El Zagal foamed with rage and vexation, but there was no time to be lost. He was beset by the alfaquis and the nobles of his court; the youthful cavaliers were hot for action, the common people loud in their complaints that the richest cities were abandoned to the enemy. The old warrior was naturally fond of fighting; he saw also, that to remain inactive would endanger both crown and kingdom, whereas a successful blow would secure his popularity in Granada. He had a much more powerful force than his nephew, having lately received reinforcements from Baza, Guadix, and Almaria; he could march therefore with a large force, and yet leave a strong garrison in the Alhambra. He formed his measures accordingly, and departed suddenly in the night, at the head of one thousand horse and twenty thousand foot. He took the most unfrequented roads along the chain of mountains extending

from Granada to the height of Bentomiz, and proceeded with such rapidity as to arrive there before King Ferdinand had notice of his approach.

The Christians were alarmed one evening by the sudden blazing of great fires on the mountain, about the fortress of Bentomiz. By the ruddy light they beheld the flash of weapons and the array of troops, and they heard the distant sound of Moorish drums and trumpets. The fires of Bentomiz were answered by fires on the towers of Velez Malaga. The shouts of "El Zagal! El Zagal!" echoed along the cliffs and resounded from the city, and the Christians found that the old warrior king of Granada was on the mountain above their camp.

The spirits of the Moors were suddenly raised to a pitch of the greatest exultation, while the Christians were astonished to see this storm of war ready to burst upon their heads. The Count de Cabra, with his accustomed eagerness when there was a king in the field, would fain have scaled the heights, and attacked El Zagal before he had time to form his camp; but Ferdinand, who was more cool and wary, restrained him. To attack the height would be to abandon the siege. He ordered every one, therefore, to keep vigilant watch at his post, and to stand ready to defend it to the utmost, but on no account to sally forth and attack the enemy.

All night the signal fires kept blazing along the mountains, rousing and animating the whole country. The morning sun rose over the lofty summit of Bentomiz on a scene of martial splendour. As its rays glanced down the mountain, they lighted up the white tents of the Christian cavaliers, cresting its lower prominences, their pennons and ensigns fluttering in the morning breeze. The sumptuous pavilion of the king, with the holy standard of the cross, and the royal banners of Castile and Arragon, dominated the encampment. Beyond lay the city, its lofty castle and numerous towers glistening with arms, while above all, and just on the profile of the height, in the full blaze of the rising sun, were descried the tents of the Moor, his turbaned troops clustering about them, and his infidel banners floating against the sky. Columns of smoke rose where the night fire had blazed, and the clash of the Moorish cymbal, the bray of the trumpet, and the neigh of steeds, were faintly heard from those airy heights. So pure and transparent is the atmosphere in this region, that every

object can be distinctly seen at a great distance, and the Christians were able to behold the formidable host of foes, that were gathering on the summits of the surrounding mountains.

One of the first measures of the Moorish king was to detach a large force under Rodovan de Vanegas, alcayde of Granada, to fall upon the convoy of ordnance, which stretched for a great distance through the mountain defiles. Ferdinand had anticipated this attempt, and sent the commander of Leon with a body of horse and foot to reinforce the master of Alcantara. El Zagal, from his mountain height, beheld the detachment issue from the camp, and immediately recalled Rodovan de Vanegas. The armies now remained quiet for a time, the Moor looking grimly down upon the Christian camp, like a tiger meditating a bound upon his prey. The Christians were in a fearful jeopardy; a hostile city below them, a powerful army above them, and on every side mountains filled with implacable foes.

After El Zagal had maturely consulted the situation of the Christian camp, and informed himself of all the passes of the mountain, he conceived a plan to surprise the enemy, which he flattered himself would ensure their ruin, and, perhaps, the capture of King Ferdinand. He wrote a letter to the alcayde of the city, commanding him, in the dead of the night, on a signal fire being made from the mountain, to sally forth with all his troops, and fall furiously upon the camp. The king would, at the same time, rush down with his army from the mountain, and assail it on the opposite side, thus overwhelming it at the hour of deep repose. This letter he despatched by a renegado Christian, who knew all the secret roads of the country, and, if taken, could pass himself for a Christian who had escaped from captivity.

The fierce El Zagal, confident in the success of his stratagem, looked down upon the Christians as his devoted victims. As the sun went down, and the long shadows of the mountains stretched across the vega, he pointed with exultation to the camp below, apparently unconscious of the impending danger. "Alla akbar!" exclaimed he, "God is great! Behold the unbelievers are delivered into our hands: their king and choicest chivalry will soon be at our mercy. Now is the time to show the courage of men, and by one glorious victory retrieve all that we have lost. Happy he who falls fighting in

the cause of the prophet: he will at once be transported to the paradise of the faithful, and surrounded by immortal houries! Happy he who shall survive victorious: he will behold Granada, an earthly paradise, once more delivered from its foes, and restored to all its glory!" The words of El Zagal were received with acclamations by his troops, who waited impatiently for the appointed hour to pour down from their mountain hold upon the Christians.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Queen Isabella and her court had remained at Cordova in great anxiety for the result of the royal expedition. Every day brought tidings of the difficulties which attended the transportation of the ordnance and munitions, and of the critical situation of the army.

While in this state of anxious suspense, couriers arrived with all speed from the frontiers, bringing tidings of the sudden sally of El Zagal from Granada to surprise the Christian camp. All Cordova was in consternation. The destruction of the Andalusian chivalry among the mountains of this very neighbourhood was called to mind; it was feared that similar ruin was about to burst forth from rocks and precipices upon Ferdinand and his army.

Queen Isabella shared in the public alarm; but it served to rouse all the energies of her heroic mind. Instead of uttering idle apprehensions, she sought only how to avert the danger. She called upon all the men of Andalusia, under the age of seventy, to arm and hasten to the relief of their sovereign, and she prepared to set out with the first levies.

The grand cardinal of Spain, old Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, in whom the piety of the saint and the wisdom of the counsellor were mingled with the fire of the cavalier, offered high pay to all horsemen who would follow him to aid their king and the Christian cause; and, buckling on armour, prepared to lead them to the scene of danger.

The summons of the queen roused the quick Andalusian spirit. Warriors, who had long since given up fighting, and had sent their sons to battle, now seized the sword and lance that were rusting on the wall, and marshalled forth their gray-headed domestics and their grandchildren for the field. The great dread was, that all aid would arrive too late. El

Zagal and his host had passed like a storm through the mountains, and it was feared the tempest had already burst upon the Christian camp.

In the meanwhile the night had closed, which had been appointed by El Zagal for the execution of his plan. He had watched the last light of day expire, and all the Spanish camp remained tranquil. As the hours wore away, the camp fires were gradually extinguished. No drum or trumpet sounded from below; nothing was heard but now and then the heavy tread of troops, or the echoing tramp of horses, the usual patroles of the camp, and the changes of the guard. El Zagal restrained his own impatience, and that of his troops, until the night should be advanced, and the camp sunk in that heavy sleep from which men are with difficulty awakened, and, when awakened, so prone to be bewildered and dismayed.

At length the appointed hour arrived. By order of the Moorish king a bright flame sprung up from the height of Bentomiz; but El Zagal looked in vain for the responding light from the city. His impatience could brook no longer delay: he ordered the advance of the army to descend the mountain defile, and attack the camp. The defile was narrow and overhung by rocks. As the troops proceeded, they came suddenly, in a shadowy hollow, upon a dark mass of Christian warriors. A loud shout burst forth, and the Christians rushed to assail them. The Moors, surprised and disconcerted, retreated in confusion to the height. When El Zagal heard of a Christian force posted in the defile, he doubted some counter plan of the enemy. He gave orders to light the mountain fires. On a signal given, bright flames sprung out on every height, from great pyres of wood prepared for the purpose. Cliff blazed out after cliff, until the whole atmosphere was in a glow of furnace light. The ruddy glare lit up the glens and passes of the mountains, and fell strongly upon the Christian camp, revealing all its tents, and every post and bulwark. Wherever El Zagal turned his eyes, he beheld the light of his fires flashed back from cuirass, and helm, and sparkling lance; he beheld a grove of spears planted in every pass, every assailable point bristling with arms, and squadrons of horse and foot, in battle array, awaiting his attack.

In fact, the letter of El Zagal to the alcayde of Velez Malaga had been intercepted by the vigilant Ferdinand, and the

renegado messenger hanged, and secret measures taken, after the night had closed in, to give the enemy a warm reception. El Zagal saw that his plan of surprise was discovered and foiled: furious with disappointment, he ordered his troops forward to the attack. They rushed down the defile with loud cries, but were again encountered by the mass of Christian warriors, being the advanced guard of the army, commanded by Don Hurtado de Mendoza, brother of the grand cardinal. The Moors were again repulsed, and retreated up the heights. Don Hurtado would have pursued them; but the ascent was steep and rugged, and easily defended by the Moors. A sharp action was kept up through the night with crossbows, darts, and arquebusses; the cliffs echoed with deafening uproar, while the fires, blazing upon the mountains, threw a lurid and uncertain light upon the scene.

When the day dawned, and the Moors saw that there was no coöperation from the city, they began to slacken in their ardour: they beheld also every pass of the mountain filled with Christian troops, and began to apprehend an assault in return. Just then King Ferdinand sent the Marquis of Cadiz, with horse and foot, to seize upon a height occupied by a battalion of the enemy. The marquis assailed the Moors with his usual intrepidity, and soon put them to flight. The others, who were above, seeing their companions flying, were seized with a sudden alarm. They threw down their arms and retreated. One of those unaccountable panics which now and then seize upon great bodies of people, and to which the light-spirited Moors were very prone, now spread through the camp. They were terrified they knew not why, or at what. They threw away swords, lances, breastplates, crossbows, everything that could burden or impede their flight, and, spreading themselves wildly over the mountains, fled headlong down the defiles. They fled without pursuers, from the glimpse of each others arms, from the sound of each others footsteps. Rodovan de Vanegas, the brave alcayde of Granada, alone succeeded in collecting a body of the fugitives: he made a circuit with them through the passes of the mountains, and, forcing his way across a weak part of the Christian lines, galloped towards Velez Malaga. The rest of the Moorish host was completely scattered. In vain did El Zagal and his knights attempt to rally them; they were left almost alone, and had to consult their own security by flight. The Marquis of Cadiz,

finding no opposition, ascended from height to height, cautiously reconnoitring, and fearful of some stratagem or ambush. All, however, was quiet. He reached, with his men, the place which the Moorish army had occupied: the heights were abandoned, and strewed with cuirasses, cimeters, crossbows, and other weapons. His force was too small to pursue the enemy, and he returned to the royal camp, laden with the spoils.

King Ferdinand at first could not credit so signal and miraculous a defeat. He suspected some lurking stratagem. He ordered, therefore, that a strict watch should be maintained throughout the camp, and every one be ready for instant action. The following night a thousand cavaliers and hidalgos kept guard about the royal tent, as they had done for several preceding nights, nor did the king relax this vigilance, until he received certain intelligence that the army was completely scattered, and El Zagal flying in confusion.

The tidings of this rout, and of the safety of the Christian army, arrived at Cordova just as the reinforcements were on the point of setting out. The anxiety and alarm of the queen and the public were turned to transports of joy and gratitude. The forces were disbanded, solemn processions were made, and *Te Deums* chanted in the churches for so signal a victory.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE daring spirit of the old warrior, Muley Abdalla el Zagal, in sallying forth to defend his territories, while he left an armed rival in his capital, had struck the people of Granada with admiration. They recalled his former exploits, and again anticipated some hardy achievement from his furious valour. Couriers from the army reported its formidable position on the height of Bentomiz. For a time there was a pause in the bloody commotions of the city: all attention was turned to the blow about to be struck at the Christian camp. The same considerations, which diffused anxiety and terror through Cordova, swelled every bosom with exulting confidence in Granada. The Moors expected to hear of another massacre, like that in the mountains of Malaga. "El Zagal has again entrapped the enemy!" was the cry. "The power of the unbelievers is about to be struck to the heart; and we shall soon see the Christian king led captive to the

capital!" Thus the name of El Zagal was on every tongue. He was extolled as the saviour of the country, the only one worthy of wearing the Moorish crown. Boabdil was reviled as basely remaining passive while his country was invaded; and so violent became the clamour of the populace, that his adherents trembled for his safety.

While the people of Granada were impatiently looking for tidings of the anticipated victory, scattered horsemen came spurring across the vega. They were fugitives from the Moorish army, and brought the first incoherent account of its defeat. Every one who attempted to tell the tale of this unaccountable panic and dispersion was as if bewildered by the broken recollection of some frightful dream. He knew not how or why it came to pass. He talked of a battle in the night among rocks and precipices, by the glare of bale-fires; of multitudes of armed foes in every pass, seen by gleams and flashes; of the sudden horror that seized upon the army at daybreak, its headlong flight and total dispersion. Hour after hour the arrival of other fugitives confirmed the story of ruin and disgrace.

In proportion to their recent vaunting was the humiliation that now fell upon the people of Granada. There was a universal burst, not of grief, but indignation.

They confounded the leader with the army; the deserted with those who had abandoned him; and El Zagal, from being their idol, became the object of their execration. He had sacrificed the army; he had disgraced the nation; he had betrayed the country. He was a dastard, a traitor; he was unworthy to reign!

On a sudden, one among the multitude cried out, "Long live Boabdil el Chico!" The cry was echoed on all sides, and every one shouted, "Long live Boabdil el Chico! long live the legitimate king of Granada! and death to all usurpers!" In the excitement, of the moment they thronged to the albaycin, and those, who had lately besieged Boabdil with arms, now surrounded his palace with acclamations. The keys of the city and of all the fortresses were laid at his feet; he was borne in state to the Alhambra, and once more seated, with all due ceremony, on the throne of his ancestors.

Boabdil had by this time become so accustomed to be crowned and uncrowned by the multitude, that he put no great faith in the duration of their loyalty. He knew that he

was surrounded by hollow hearts, and that most of the courtiers of the Alhambra were secretly devoted to his uncle. He ascended the throne as the rightful sovereign, who had been dispossessed of it by usurpation, and he ordered the heads of four of the principal nobles to be struck off, who had been most zealous in support of the usurper. Executions of this kind were matters of course on any change of Moorish government; and Boabdil was extolled for his moderation and humanity, in being content with so small a sacrifice. The factions were awed into obedience; the populace, delighted with any change, extolled Boabdil to the skies, and the name of Muley Abdalla el Zagal was for a time a bye-word of scorn and opprobrium throughout the city.

Never was any commander more astonished and confounded by a sudden reverse than El Zagal. The evening had seen him with a powerful army at his command, his enemy within his grasp, and victory about to cover him with glory, and to consolidate his power. The morning beheld him a fugitive among the mountains; his army, his prosperity, his power, all dispelled he knew not how; gone like a dream of the night. In vain had he tried to stem the headlong flight of the soldiery. He saw his squadrons breaking and dispersing among the cliffs of the mountains, until, of all his host, only a handful of cavaliers remained faithful to him. With these he made a gloomy retreat towards Granada, but with a heart full of foreboding. When he drew near the city, he paused on the banks of the Xenil, and sent forth scouts to collect intelligence. They returned with dejected countenances. "The gates of Granada," said they, "are closed against you. The banner of Boabdil floats on the tower of the Alhambra."

El Zagal turned his steed, and departed in silence. He retreated to the town of Almuneçar, and from thence to Almeria. places which still remained faithful to him. Restless and uneasy at being so distant from the capital, he again changed his abode, and repaired to the city of Guadix, within a few leagues of Granada. Here he remained, endeavouring to rally his forces, and preparing to avail himself of any change in the fluctuating politics of the metropolis.

CHAPTER L.

THE people of Velez Malaga had beheld the camp of Muley

Abdalla el Zagal covering the summit of Bentomiz, and glittering in the last rays of the setting sun. During the night they had been alarmed and perplexed by signal fires on the mountain, and by the distant sound of battle. When the morning broke, the Moorish army had vanished as if by enchantment. While the inhabitants were lost in wonder and conjecture, a body of cavalry, the fragment of the army saved by Rodovan de Vanegas, the brave alcayde of Granada, came galloping to the gates. The tidings of the strange discomfiture of the host filled the city with consternation; but Rodovan exhorted the people to continue their resistance. He was devoted to El Zagal, and confident in his skill and prowess; and felt assured that he would soon collect his scattered forces, and return with fresh troops from Granada. The people were comforted by the words and encouraged by the presence of Rodovan, and they had still a lingering hope, that the heavy artillery of the Christians might be locked up in the impassable defiles of the mountains. This hope was soon at an end. The very next day they beheld long laborious lines of ordnance slowly moving into the Spanish camp; lombards, ribodoquines, catapultas, and cars laden with munitions, while the escort, under the brave master of Alcantara, wheeled in great battalions into the camp, to augment the force of the besiegers.

The intelligence, that Granada had shut its gates againt El Zagal, and that no reinforcements were to be expected, completed the despair of the inhabitants; even Rodovan himself lost confidence, and advised capitulation.

The terms were arranged between the alcayde and the noble Count de Cipientes. The latter had been prisoner of Rodovan at Granada, who had treated him with chivalrous courtesy. They had conceived a mutual esteem for each other, and met as ancient friends.

Ferdinand granted favourable conditions; for he was eager to proceed against Malaga. The inhabitants were permitted to depart with their effects, except their arms, and to reside, if they chose it, in Spain, in any place distant from the sea. One hundred and twenty Christians of both sexes were rescued from captivity by the surrender of Velez Malaga, and were sent to Cordova, where they were received with great tenderness by the queen, and her daughter the Infanta Isabella, in the famous cathedral, in the midst of public rejoicings for the victory.

The capture of Velez Malaga was followed by the surrender of Bentomiz, Comares, and all the towns and fortresses of the Axarquia, which were strongly garrisoned, and discreet and valiant cavaliers appointed as their alcaydes. The inhabitants of nearly forty towns of the Alpuzarra mountains also sent deputations to the Castilian sovereigns, taking the oath of allegiance as Mudehares, or Moslem vassals.

About the same time came letters from Boabdil el Chico, announcing to the sovereigns the revolution of Granada in his favour. He solicited kindness and protection for the inhabitants who had returned to their alleigance, and for those of all other places which should renounce allegiance to his uncle. By this means, he observed, the whole kingdom of Granada would soon be induced to acknowledge his sway, and would be held by him in faithful vassalage to the Castilian crown.

The Catholic sovereigns complied with his request. Protection was immediately extended to the inhabitants of Granada, permitting them to cultivate their fields in peace, and to trade with the Christian territories in all articles excepting arms, being provided with letters of surety from some Christian captain or alcayde. The same favour was promised to all other places that within six months should renounce El Zagal, and come under alleigance to the younger king. Should they not do so within that time, the sovereigns threatened to make war upon them, and conquer them for themselves. This measure had a great effect in inducing many to return to the standard of Boabdil.

Having made every necessary arrangement for the government and security of the newly conquered territory, Ferdinand turned his attention to the great object of his campaign, the reduction of Malaga.

CHAPTER LI.

The city of Malaga lies in the lap of a fertile valley, surrounded by mountains, excepting on the part which lies open to the sea. As it was one of the most important, so it was one of the strongest cities of the Moorish kingdom. It was fortified by walls of prodigious strength, studded with a great number of huge towers. On the land side it was protected by a natural barrier of mountains, and, on the other,

the waves of the Mediterranean beat against the foundations of its massive bulwarks.

At one end of the city, near the sea, on a high mound, stood the alcazaba or citadel, a fortress of great strength. Immediately above this rose a steep and rocky mount, on the top of which, in old times had been a pharos, or lighthouse, from which the height derived its name of Gibralfaro.* It was at present crowned by an immense castle, which, from its lofty and craggy situation, its vast walls and mighty towers, was deemed impregnable. It communicated with the alcazaba by a covered way, six paces broad, leading down between two walls, along the profile or ridge of the rock. The castle of Gibralfaro commanded both citadel and city, and was capable, if both were taken, of maintaining a siege.

Two large suburbs adjoined the city: in the one towards the sea were dwelling houses of the most opulent inhabitants, adorned with hanging gardens; the other, on the land side, was thickly peopled, and surrounded by strong walls and towers.

Malaga possessed a brave and numerous garrison, and the common people were active, hardy and resolute; but the city was rich and commercial, and under the habitual control of numerous opulent merchants, who dreaded the ruinous consequences of a siege. They were little zealous for the warlike renown of their city, and longed rather to participate in the enviable security of property, and the lucrative privileges of safe traffic with the Christian territories, granted to all places which declared for Boabdil. At the head of these gainful citizens was Ali Dordux, a mighty merchant of uncounted wealth, whose ships traded to every port of the Levant, and whose word was a law in Malaga.

Ali Dordux assembled the most opulent and important of his commercial brethren, and they repaired in a body to the alcabaza, where they were received by the alcayde, Albozen Connexa, with that deference generally shown to men of their great local dignity and power of purse. Ali Dordux was ample and stately in his form, and fluent and emphatic in his discourse. His eloquence had an effect, therefore, upon the alcayde, as he represented the hopelessness of a defence of Malaga, the misery that must attend a siege, and the ruin

* A corruption of Gibel-fano, the hill of the light-house.

that must follow a capture by force of arms. On the other hand, he set forth the grace that might be obtained from the Castilian sovereigns by an early and voluntary acknowledgment of Boabdil as king, the peaceful possession of their property, and the profitable commerce with the Christian ports that would be allowed them. He was seconded by his weighty and important coadjutors: and the alcayde, accustomed to regard them as the arbiters of the affairs of the place, yielded to their united counsels. He departed, therefore, with all speed to the Christian camp, empowered to arrange a capitulation with the Castilian monarch, and in the meantime his brother remained in command of the alcazaba.

There was, at this time, as alcayde, in the old crag-built castle of Gibralfaro, a warlike and fiery Moor, an implacable enemy of the Christians. This was no other than Hamet Zeli, surnamed El Zegri, the once formidable alcayde of Ronda, and the terror of its mountains. He had never forgiven the capture of his favourite fortress, and panted for vengeance on the Christians. Notwithstanding his reverses, he had retained the favour of El Zagal, who knew how to appreciate a bold warrior of the kind, and had placed him in command of this important fortress of Gibralfaro.

Hamet el Zegri had gathered round him the remnant of his band of Gomeres, with others of the same tribe. These fierce warriors were nestled, like so many war-hawks, about their lofty cliff. They looked down with martial contempt upon the commercial city of Malaga, which they were placed to protect; or rather, they esteemed it only for its military importance and its capability of defence. They held no communion with its trading, gainful inhabitants, and even considered the garrison of the alcazaba as their inferiors. War was their pursuit and passion; they rejoiced in its turbulent and perilous scenes; and, confident in the strength of the city, and, above all, of their castle, they set at defiance the menace of Christian invasion. There were among them, also, many apostate Moors, who had once embraced Christianity, but had since recanted, and had fled from the vengeance of the Inquisition. These were desperadoes, who had no mercy to expect should they again fall into the hands of the enemy.

Such were the fierce elements of the garrison of Gibral-

faro; and its rage may easily be conceived at hearing, that Malaga was to be given up without a blow; that they were to sink into Christian vassals, under the intermediate sway of Boabdil el Chico, and that the alcayde of the alcazaba had departed to arrange the terms of capitulation.

Hamet el Zegri determined to avert, by desperate means, the threatened degradation. He knew that there was a large party in the city faithful to El Zagal, being composed of warlike men, who had taken refuge from the various mountain towns which had been captured. Their feelings were desperate as their fortunes, and, like Hamet, they panted for revenge upon the Christians. With these he had a secret conference, and received assurances of their adherence to him in any measures of defence. As to the council of peaceful inhabitants, he considered it unworthy the consideration of a soldier, and he spurned at the interference of the wealthy merchant, Ali Dordux, in matters of warfare.

"Still," said Hamet el Zegri, "let us proceed regularly." So he descended with his Gomeres to the citadel, entered it suddenly, put to death the brother of the alcayde and such of the garrison as made any demur, and then summoned the principal inhabitants to deliberate on measures for the welfare of the city.*

The wealthy merchants again mounted to the citadel, excepting Ali Dordux, who refused to obey the summons. They entered with hearts filled with awe, for they found Hamet surrounded by his grim African guard, and all the array of military power, and they beheld the bloody traces of the recent massacre.

Hamet el Zegri rolled a dark and searching eye upon the assembly. "Who," said he, "is loyal and devoted to Muley Abdalla el Zagal?" Every one present asserted his loyalty. "Good!" said Hamet, "and who is ready to prove his devotion to his sovereign by defending this his important city to the last extremity?". Every one present expressed his readiness. "Enough," observed Hamet: "the alcayde, Albozen Connexa, has proved himself a traitor to his sovereign and to you all; for he has conspired to deliver the place to the Christians. It behoves you to choose some other commander, capable of defending your city against the approaching enemy." The assembly declared unanimously,

* Cura de los Palacios, c. 82.

that there could be none so worthy of the command as himself. So Hamet el Zegri was appointed alcayde of Malaga, and immediately proceeded to man the forts and towns with his partisans, and to make every preparation for a desperate resistance.

Intelligence of these occurrences put an end to the negociations between King Ferdinand and the superseded alcayde Albozen Connexa, and it was supposed that there was no alternative but to lay siege to the place. The Marquis of Cadiz, however, found at Velez a Moorish cavalier of some note, a native of Malaga, who offered to tamper with Hamet el Zegri for the surrender of the city; or, at least, of the castle of Gibralfaro. The marquis communicated this to the king. "I put this business and the key of my treasury in your hand," said Ferdinand: act, stipulate, and disburse, in my name, as you think proper."

The marquis armed the Moor with his own lance, cuirass, and target, and mounted him on one of his own horses. He equipped, also, in similar style, another Moor, his companion and relation. They bore secret letters to Hamet from the marquis, offering him the town of Coin in perpetual inheritance, and four thousand doblas in gold, if he would deliver up Gibralfaro; together with large sums to be distributed among his officers and soldiers; and he held out unlimited rewards for the surrender of the city.*

Hamet had a warrior's admiration for the Marquis of Cadiz, and received his messengers with courtesy, in his fortress of Gibralfaro. He even listened to their propositions with patience, and dismissed them in safety, though with an absolute refusal. The marquis thought his reply was not so peremptory as to discourage another effort. The emissaries were despatched, therefore, a second time, with further propositions. They approached Malaga in the night; but found the guards doubled, patroles abroad, and the whole place on the alert. They were discovered, pursued, and only saved themselves by the fleetness of their steeds, and their knowledge of the passes of the mountains.

Finding all attempts to tamper with the faith of Hamet el Zegri utterly futile, King Ferdinand publicly summoned the city to surrender; offering the most favourable terms in case of immediate compliance, but threatening captivity to all the inhabitants in case of resistance.

* Cura de los Palacios, c. 82.

The message was delivered in presence of the principal inhabitants, who, however, were too much in awe of the stern alcayde to utter a word. Hamet el Zegri then rose haughtily, and replied, that the city of Malaga had not been confided to him to be surrendered, but defended; and the king should witness how he acquitted himself of his charge.*

The messengers returned with formidable accounts of the force of the garrison, the strength of the fortifications, and the determined spirit of the commander and his men. The king immediately sent orders to have the heavy artillery forwarded from Antequera; and, on the 7th of May, marched with his army towards Malaga.

CHAPTER LII.

THE army of Ferdinand advanced in lengthened line, glittering along the foot of the mountains which border the Mediterranean; while a fleet of vessels, freighted with heavy artillery and warlike munitions, kept pace with it, at a short distance from the land, covering the sea with a thousand gleaming sails. When Hamet el Zegri saw this force approaching, he set fire to the houses of the suburbs which adjoined the walls, and sent forth three battalions to encounter the advance guard of the enemy.

The Christian army drew near to the city at that end where the castle and rocky height of Gibralfaro defend the seabord. Immediately opposite to the castle, and about two bow-shots' distance, and between it and the high chain of mountains, was a steep and rocky hill, commanding a pass through which the Christians must march to penetrate to the vega, and surround the city. Hamet el Zegri ordered the three battalions to take their stations, one on this hill, another in the pass near the castle, and a third on the side of the mountain near the sea.

A body of Spanish foot soldiers of the advance guard, sturdy mountaineers of Gallicia, sprang forward to climb the side of the height next the sea; at the same time a number of cavaliers and hidalgos of the royal household attacked the Moors who guarded the pass below. The Moors defended their posts with obstinate valour. The Gallicians were re-

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 74.

peatedly overpowered and driven down the hill, but as often rallied; and, being reinforced by the hidalgos and cavaliers, returned to the assault. This obstinate struggle lasted for six hours. The strife was of a deadly kind, not merely with crossbows and arquebuses, but hand to hand, with swords and daggers: no quarter was claimed or given on either side: they fought not to make captives, but to slay. It was but the advance guard of the Christian army that was engaged: so narrow was the pass along the coast, that the army could proceed only in file. Horse and foot, and beasts of burden, were crowded one upon another, impeding each other, and blocking up the narrow and rugged defile. The soldiers heard the uproar of the battle, the sound of trumpets, and the war cries of the Moors, but tried in vain to press forward to the assistance of their companions.

At length a body of foot soldiers of the Holy Brotherhood climbed, with great difficulty, the steep side of the mountain which overhung the pass, and advanced with seven banners displayed. The Moors, seeing this force above them, abandoned the pass in despair.

The battle was still raging on the height. The Gallicians, though supported by Castilian troops, under Don Hurtado de Mendoza and Garcillaso de la Vega, were severely pressed, and roughly handled by the Moors. At length a brave standard-bearer, Luys Mazedo by name, threw himself into the midst of the enemy, and planted his banner on the summit. The Gallicians and Castilians, stimulated by this noble self-devotion, followed him, fighting desperately, and the Moors were at length driven to their castle of Gibralfaro.*

This important height being taken, the pass lay open to the army: but by this time evening was advancing, and the host was too weary and exhausted to seek proper situations for the encampment. The king, attended by several grandees and cavaliers, went the rounds at night, stationing outposts towards the city, and guards and patroles to give the alarm on the least movement of the enemy. All night the Christians lay upon their arms, lest there should be some attempt to sally forth and attack them.

When the morning dawned, the king gazed with admira-

* Pulgar, Cronica.

tion at this city, which he hoped soon to add to his dominions. It was surrounded on one side by vineyards, gardens, and orchards, which covered the hills with verdure; on the other side its walls were bathed by the smooth and tranquil sea. Its vast and lofty towers, and prodigious castles showed the labours of magnanimous men, in former times, to protect their favourite abode. Hanging gardens, groves of oranges, citrons, and pomegranates, with tall cedars and stately palms, were mingled with the stern battlements and towers, bespeaking the opulence and luxury that reigned within.

In the meantime the Christian army poured through the pass, and throwing out its columns, and extending its lines, took possession of every vantage-ground around the city. King Ferdinand surveyed the ground, and appointed the stations of the different commanders.

The important mount, which had cost so evident a struggle, and which faced the powerful fortress of Gibralfaro, was given in charge to Roderigo Ponce de Leon, the Marquis of Cadiz, who in all sieges claimed the post of danger. He had several noble cavaliers, with their retainers, in his encampment, which consisted of fifteen hundred horse, and fourteen thousand foot; and extended from the summit of the mount to the margin of the sea, completely blocking up the approach to the city on that side. From this post a line of encampments extended quite round the city to the seabord, fortified by bulwarks and deep ditches; while a fleet of armed ships and galleys stretched before the harbour, so that the place was completely invested by sea and land. The various parts of the valley now resounded with the din of preparation, and were filled with artificers preparing warlike engines and munitions: armourers and smiths, with glowing forges and deafening hammers; carpenters and engineers constructing machines wherewith to assail the walls; stone-cutters shaping stone balls for the ordnance; and burners of charcoal preparing fuel for the furnaces and forges.

When the encampment was formed, the heavy ordnance was landed from the ships, and mounted in various parts of the camp. Five huge lombards were placed on the mount, commanded by the Marquis of Cadiz, so as to bear upon the castle of Gibralfaro.

The Moors made strenuous efforts to impede these prepara-

tions. A heavy fire was kept up from their ordnance upon the men employed in digging trenches or constructing batteries, so that the latter had to work principally in the night. The royal tents had been stationed conspicuously and within reach of the Moorish batteries, but were so warmly assailed that they had to be removed behind a hill.

When the works were completed, the Christian batteries opened in return, and kept up a tremendous cannonade, while the fleet, approaching the land, assailed the city vigorously on the opposite side.

"It was a glorious and delectable sight," observes Fray Antonio Agapida, "to behold this infidel city thus surrounded by sea and land by a mighty Christian force. Every mound in its circuit was, as it were, a little city of tents, bearing the standard of some renowned Catholic warrior. Besides the warlike ships and galleys which lay before the place, the sea was covered with innumerable sails, passing and repassing, appearing and disappearing, being engaged in bringing supplies for the subsistence of the army. It would have seemed a vast spectacle contrived to recreate the eye, had not the volleying bursts of flame and smoke from the ships, which appeared to lie asleep on the quiet sea, and the thunder of ordnance from camp and city, from tower and battlement, told the deadly warfare that was waging."

At night the scene was far more direful than in the day. The cheerful light of the sun was gone; there was nothing but the flashes of artillery, or the baleful gleams of combustibles thrown into the city, and the conflagration of the houses. The fire kept up from the Christian batteries was incessant; there were seven great lombards, in particular, called the Seven Sisters of Ximenes, which did tremendous execution. The Moorish ordnance replied in thunder from the walls; Gibralfaro was wrapped in volumes of smoke, rolling about its base; and Hamet el Zegri and his Gomeres looked out with triumph upon the tempest of war they had awakened. "Truly they were so many demons incarnate," says the pious Fray Antonio Agapida, "who were permitted by Heaven to enter into and possess this infidel city for its perdition."

CHAPTER LIII.

THE attack on Malaga by sea and land was kept up for several days with tremendous violence, but without producing any great impression, so strong were the ancient bulwarks of the city. The Count de Cifuentes was the first to signalize himself by any noted achievement. A main tower of the suburbs had been shattered by the ordnance, and the battlements demolished, so as to yield no shelter to its defenders. Seeing this, the count assembled a gallant band of cavaliers of the royal household, and advanced to take it by storm; they applied scaling ladders, and mounted sword in hand. The Moors, having no longer battlements to protect them, descended to a lower floor, and made furious resistance from the windows and loopholes; they poured down boiling pitch and rosin, and hurled stones and darts, and arrows on the assailants. Many of the Christians were slain; their ladders were destroyed by flaming combustibles, and the count was obliged to retreat from before the tower. On the following day he renewed the attack with superior force, and, after a severe combat, succeeded in planting his victorious banner on the tower.

The Moors now assailed the tower in their turn; they undermined the part towards the city, placed props of wood under the foundation, and, setting fire to them, drew off to a distance. In a little while the props gave way, the foundation sank, the tower was rent, part of its wall fell with a tremendous noise, many of the Christians were thrown out headlong, and the rest were laid open to the missiles of the enemy.

By this time, however, a breach had been made in the wall adjoining the tower, and troops poured in to the assistance of their comrades. A continued battle was kept up for two days and a night by reinforcements from camp and city. The parties fought backwards and forwards through the breach of the wall, with alternate success, and the vicinity of the town was strewed with the dead and wounded. At length the Moors gradually gave way, disputing every inch of ground, until they were driven into the city; and the Christians remained masters of the greater part of the suburb.

This partial success, though gained with great toil and bloodshed, gave temporary animation to the Christians. They

soon found, however, that the attack on the main works of the city was a much more arduous task. The garrison contained veterans who had served in many of the towns captured by the Christians: they were no longer confounded and dismayed by the battering ordnance and other strange engines of foreign invention, and had become expert in parrying their effects, in repairing breaches, and erecting counterworks.

The Christians, accustomed of late to speedy conquests of Moorish fortresses, became impatient of the slow progress of the siege. Many were apprehensive of a scarcity of provisions, from the difficulty of subsisting so numerous a host in the heart of the enemies' country, where it was necessary to transport supplies across rugged and hostile mountains, or subjected to the uncertainties of the seas. Many were also alarmed at a pestilence which broke out in the neighbouring villages, and some were so overcome by these apprehensions, as to abandon the camp and return to their homes.

Several of the loose and worthless hangers-on, that infest all great armies, hearing these murmurs, thought that the siege would soon be raised, and deserted to the enemy, hoping to make their fortunes; they gave exaggerated accounts of the alarms and discontents of the army, and represented the troops as daily returning home in bands. Above all, they declared, that the gunpowder was nearly exhausted, so that the artillery would soon be useless. They assured the Moors, therefore, that, if they persisted in their defence a little longer, the king would be obliged to draw off his forces and abandon the siege.

The reports of these renegadoes gave fresh courage to the garrison; they made vigorous sallies upon the camp, harassing it by night and day, and obliging every part to be guarded with the most painful vigilance; they fortified the weak parts of their walls with ditches and palisadoes, and gave every manifestation of a determined and unyielding spirit.

Ferdinand soon received intelligence of the reports which had been carried to the Moors. He understood, that they had been informed, likewise, that the queen was alarmed for the safety of the camp, and had written repeatedly, urging him to abandon the siege. As the best means of disproving all these falsehoods, and of destroying the vain hopes of the enemy, Ferdinand wrote to the queen, entreating her to come and take up her residence in the camp.

CHAPTER LIV.

GREAT was the enthusiasm of the army, when they beheld their patriot queen advancing in state, to share the toils and dangers of her people. Isabella entered the camp, attended by the dignitaries, and the whole retinue of her court, to manifest, that this was no temporary visit. On one side of her was her daughter the Infanta; on the other, the grand cardinal of Spain; and Hernando de Talavera, the prior of Praxo, confessor to the queen, followed, with a great train of prelates, courtiers, cavaliers, and ladies of distinction. The cavalcade moved in calm and stately order through the camp, softening the iron aspect of war by this array of courtly grace and female beauty.

Isabella had commanded, that, on her coming to the camp, the horrors of war should be suspended, and fresh offers of peace made to the enemy. On her arrival, therefore, there had been a cessation of firing throughout the camp. A messenger was at the same time despatched to the besieged, informing them of her being in the camp, and of the determination of the sovereigns to make it their settled residence, until the city should be taken. The same terms were offered in case of immediate surrender, that had been granted to Velez Malaga, but the inhabitants were threatened with captivity and the sword, should they persist in their defence.

Hamet el Zegri received this message with haughty contempt, and dismissed the messenger without deigning a reply.

"The Christian sovereigns," said he, "have made this offer, in consequence of their despair. The silence of their batteries proves the truth of what has been told us, that their powder is exhausted; they have no longer the means of demolishing our walls; and, if they remain much longer, the autumnal rains will interrupt their convoys, and fill their camp with famine and disease; the first storm will disperse their fleet, which has no neighbouring port of shelter. Africa will then be open to us, to procure reinforcements and supplies."

The words of Hamet el Zegri were hailed as oracular by his adherents. Many of the peaceful part of the community, however, ventured to remonstrate, and to implore him to accept the proffered mercy. The stern Hamet silenced them with a terrific threat. He declared, that whoever should talk

of capitulating, or should hold any communication with the Christians, should be put to death. His fierce Gomeres, like true men of the sword, acted upon the menace of their chieftain as upon a written law, and, having detected several of the inhabitants in secret correspondence with the enemy, they set upon and slew them, and then confiscated their effects. This struck such terror into the citizens, that those who had been loudest in their murmurs became suddenly mute, and were remarked as evincing the greatest bustle and alacrity in the defence of the city.

When the messenger returned to the camp, and reported the contemptuous reception of the royal message, King Ferdinand was exceedingly indignant. Finding the cessation of firing, on the queen's arrival, had encouraged a belief among the enemy, that there was a scarcity of powder in the camp, he ordered a general discharge from every battery. This sudden burst of war from every quarter soon convinced the Moors of their error, and completed the confusion of the citizens, who knew not which most to dread, their assailants or their defenders, the Christians or the Gomeres.

That evening the sovereigns visited the encampment of the Marquis of Cadiz, which commanded a view over a great part of the city and the camp. The tent of the marquis was of great magnitude, furnished with hangings of rich brocade, and French cloth of the rarest texture. It was in the oriental style, and, as it crowned the height, with the surrounding tents of other cavaliers, all sumptuously furnished, presented a gay and silken contrast to the opposite towers of Gibralfaro. Here a splendid collation was served up to the sovereigns; and the courtly revel that prevailed on this chivalrous encampment, the glitter of pageantry, and the bursts of festive music, made more striking the gloom and silence that reigned over the dark Moorish castle.

The Marquis of Cadiz, while it was yet light, conducted his royal visitors to every point that commanded a view of the warlike scene below. He caused the heavy lombards also to be discharged, that the queen and the ladies of the court might witness the effect of those tremendous engines. The fair dames were filled with awe and admiration, as the mountain shook beneath their feet with the thunder of the artillery, and they beheld great fragments of the Moorish walls tumbling down the rocks and precipices.

While the good marquis was displaying these things to his royal guests, he lifted up his eyes, and, to his astonishment, beheld his own banner hanging out from the nearest tower of Gibralfaro. The blood mantled in his cheek, for it was a banner which he had lost at the time of the memorable massacre of the heights of Malaga. To make this taunt more evident, several of the Gomeres displayed themselves upon the battlements, arrayed in the helmets and cuirasses of some of the cavaliers, slain or captured on that occasion.* The Marquis of Cadiz restrained his indignation, and held his peace; but several of his cavaliers vowed loudly to revenge this cruel bravado on the ferocious garrison of Gibralfaro.

CHAPTER LV.

THE Marquis of Cadiz was not a cavalier that readily forgave an injury or an insult. On the morning after the royal banquet, his batteries opened a tremendous fire upon Gibralfaro. All day the encampment was wrapped in wreaths of smoke; nor did the assault cease with the day, but throughout the night there was an incessant flashing and thundering of the lombards, and the following morning the assault rather increased than slackened in its fury. The Moorish bulwarks were no proof against these formidable engines. In a few days the lofty tower, on which the taunting banner had been displayed, was shattered; a smaller tower, in its vicinity, reduced to ruins; and a great breach made in the intervening walls.

Several of the hot-spirited cavaliers were eager for storming the breach sword in hand; others, more cool and wary, pointed out the rashness of such an attempt; for the Moors, working indefatigably in the night, had dug a deep ditch within the breach, and had fortified it with palisadoes and a high breastwork. All, however, agreed that the camp might safely be advanced near to the ruined walls, and that it ought to be so placed, in return for the insolent defiance of the enemy.

The Marquis of Cadiz felt the temerity of the measure; but he was unwilling to damp the zeal of these high-spirited cavaliers; and, having chosen the post of danger in the camp, it did not become him to decline any service, merely because

* Diego de Valera, Cronica, M.S.

it might appear perilous. He ordered his outposts, therefore, to be advanced within a stonesthrow of the breach, but exhorted the soldiers to maintain the utmost vigilance.

The thunder of the batteries had ceased; the troops, exhausted by two nights' fatigue and watchfulness, and apprehending no danger from the dismantled walls, were half of them asleep; the rest were scattered about in negligent security. On a sudden, upwards of two thousand Moors sallied forth from the castle, led on by Abraham Zenete, the principal captain under Hamet. They fell with fearful havoc upon the advanced guard, slaying many of them in their sleep, and putting the rest to headlong flight. The marquis was in his tent, about a bowshot distance, when he heard the tumult of the onset, and beheld his men flying in confusion. He rushed forth, followed by his standardbearers. "Turn again, cavaliers!" exclaimed he; "turn again! I am here, Ponce de Leon! To the foe! to the foe!" The flying troops stopped at hearing his well-known voice, rallied under his banner, and turned upon the enemy. The encampment by this time was roused; several cavaliers from the adjoining stations had hastened to the scene of action, with a number of Gallicians, and soldiers of the Holy Brotherhood. An obstinate and bloody contest ensued. The ruggedness of the place, the rocks, chasms, and declivities, broke it into numerous combats. Christian and Moor fought hand to hand, with swords and daggers: and often, grappling and struggling, rolled together down the precipices.

The banner of the marquis was in danger of being taken. He hastened to its rescue, followed by some of his bravest cavaliers. They were surrounded by the enemy, and several of them cut down. Don Diego Ponce de Leon, brother to the marquis, was wounded by an arrow; and his son-in-law, Luis Ponce, was likewise wounded: they succeeded, however, in rescuing the banner, and bearing it off in safety. The battle lasted for an hour: the height was covered with killed and wounded; and the blood flowed in streams down the rocks. At length, Abraham Zenete being disabled by the thrust of a lance, the Moors gave way, and retreated to the castle.

They now opened a galling fire from their battlements and towers, approaching the breaches, so as to discharge their crossbows and arquebuses into the advance guard of the

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encampment. The marquis was singled out: the shot fell thick about him, and one passed through his buckler, and struck upon his cuirass, but without doing him any injury. Every one now saw the danger and inutility of approaching the camp thus near to the castle; and those who had counselled it were now urgent that it should be withdrawn. It was accordingly removed back to its original ground, from which the marquis had most reluctantly advanced it. Nothing but his valour and timely aid had prevented this attack from ending in a total rout of all that part of the army.

Many cavaliers of distinction fell in this contest; but the loss of none was felt more deeply than that of Ortega de Prado, captain of escaladors. He was one of the bravest men in the service; the same who had devised the first successful blow of the war, the storming of Alhama, where he was the first to plant and mount the scaling ladders. He had always been high in the favour and confidence of the noble Ponce de Leon, who knew how to appreciate and avail himself of the merits of all able and valiant men.*

CHAPTER LVI.

GREAT were the exertions now made, both by the besiegers and the besieged, to carry on this contest with the utmost vigour. Hamet el Zegri went the rounds of the walls and towers, doubling the guards, and putting everything into the best posture of defence. The garrison was divided into parties of a hundred, to each of which a captain was appointed. Some were to patrole; others to sally forth and skirmish with the enemy; and others to hold themselves ready armed and in reserve. Six albatozas, or floating batteries, were manned, and armed with pieces of artillery to attack the fleet.

On the other hand, the Castilian sovereigns kept open a communication, by sea, with various parts of Spain, from which they received provisions of all kinds. They ordered supplies of powder, also, from Valencia, Barcelona, Sicily, and Portugal. They made great preparations for storming the city. Towers of wood were constructed, to move on wheels, each capable of holding one hundred men. They were furnished with ladders, to be thrown from their summits to the tops of the walls; and within those ladders others

* Zurita. Mariana, Abarca.

were incased, to be let down for the descent of the troops into the city. There were gallipagos, or tortoises, also; being great wooden shields, covered with hides, to protect the assailants, and those who undermined the walls.

Secret mines were commenced in various places. Some were intended to reach to the foundations of the walls, which were to be propped up with wood, ready to be set on fire; others were to pass under the walls, and remain ready to be broken open, so as to give entrance to the besiegers. At these mines the army worked day and night; and, during these secret preparations, the ordnance kept up a fire upon the city, to divert the attention of the besieged.

In the meantime, Hamet el Zegri displayed wonderful vigour and ingenuity in defending the city, and in repairing, or fortifying by deep ditches, the breaches made by the enemy. He noted, besides, every place where the camp might be assailed with advantage, and gave the besieging army no repose, night or day. While his troops sallied on the land, his floating batteries attacked the besiegers on the sea; so that there was incessant skirmishing. The tents, called the queen's hospital, were crowded with wounded, and the whole army suffered from constant watchfulness and fatigue. To guard against the sudden assaults of the Moors, the trenches were deepened, and palisadoes erected in front of the camp; and in that part facing Gibralfaro, where the rocky heights did not admit of such defences, a high rampart of earth was thrown up. The cavaliers Garcilasso de la Vega, Juan de Zuniga, and Diego de Atayde, were appointed to go the rounds, and keep vigilant watch that these fortifications were maintained in good order.

In a little while Hamet discovered the mines secretly commenced by the Christians. He immediately ordered countermines. The soldiers mutually worked until they met, and fought hand to hand in these subterranean passages. The Christians were driven out of one of their mines; fire was set to the wooden framework, and the mine destroyed. Encouraged by this success, the Moors attempted a general attack upon the mines and the besieging fleet. The battle lasted for six hours, on land and water, above and below ground, on bulwark and in trench and mine. The Moors displayed wonderful intrepidity, but were finally repulsed at all points, and obliged to retire into the city, where they were closely

invested, without the means of receiving any assistance from abroad.

The horrors of famine were now added to the other miseries of Malaga. Hamet el Zegri, with the spirit of a man bred up to war, considered everything as subservient to the wants of the soldier, and ordered all the grain in the city to be gathered and garnered up for the sole use of those who fought. Even this was dealt out sparingly; and each soldier received four ounces of bread in the morning, and two in the evening, for his daily allowance.

The wealthy inhabitants, and all those peacefully inclined, mourned over a resistance which brought destruction upon their houses, death into their families, and which they saw must end in their ruin and captivity. Still, none of them dared to speak openly of capitulation, or even to manifest their grief, lest they should awaken the wrath of their fierce defenders. They surrounded their civic champion, Ali Dordux, the great and opulent merchant, who had buckled on shield and cuirass, and taken spear in hand for the defence of his native city; and, with a large body of the braver citizens, had charge of one of the gates and a considerable portion of the walls. Drawing Ali Dordux aside, they poured forth their griefs to him in secret. "Why," said they, "should we suffer our native city to be made a mere bulwark and fighting place for foreign barbarians and desperate men? They have no families to care for, no property to lose, no love for the soil, and no value for their lives. They fight to gratify a thirst for blood, or a desire for revenge, and will fight on until Malaga be made a ruin, and its people slaves. Let us think and act for ourselves, our wives, and our children. Let us make private terms with the Christians before it is too late, and so save ourselves from destruction."

The bowels of Ali Dordux yearned towards his fellow-citizens. He bethought him also of the sweet security of peace, and the bloodless, yet gratifying, triumphs of gainful commerce. The idea likewise of a secret negociation or bargain with the Castilian sovereigns, for the redemption of his native city, was more conformable to his accustomed habits than this violent appeal to arms; for though he had, for a time, assumed the warrior, he had not forgotten the merchant. Ali Dordux communed, therefore, with the citizen-soldiers under his command, and they readily

conformed to his opinion. Concerting together, they wrote a proposition to the Castilian sovereigns, offering to admit the army into the part of the city intrusted to their care, on receiving assurance of protection for the lives and property of the inhabitants. This writing they delivered to a trusty emissary, to take to the Christian camp, appointing the hour and place of his return, that they might be ready to admit him unperceived.

The Moor made his way in safety to the camp, and was admitted to the presence of the sovereigns. Eager to gain the city without further cost of blood or treasure, they gave a written promise to grant the conditions, and the Moor set out joyfully on his return. As he approached the walls where Ali Dordux and his confederates were waiting to receive him, he was descried by a patrolling band of Gomeres, and considered a spy coming from the camp of the besiegers. They issued forth, and seized him, in sight of his employers, who gave themselves up for lost. The Gomeres had conducted him nearly to the gate, when he escaped from their grasp and fled. They endeavoured to overtake him, but were encumbered with armour; he was lightly clad, and he fled for his life. One of the Gomeres paused, and, levelling his crossbow, let fly a bolt, which pierced the fugitive between the shoulders; he fell, and was nearly within their grasp; but rose again, and, with a desperate effort, attained the Christian camp. The Gomeres gave over the pursuit, and the citizens returned thanks to Alla for their deliverance from this fearful peril. As to the faithful messenger, he died of his wound shortly after reaching the camp, consoled with the idea that he had preserved the secret and the lives of his employers.

CHAPTER LVII.

The sufferings of Malaga spread sorrow and anxiety among the Moors; and they dreaded lest this beautiful city, once the bulwark of the kingdom, should fall into the hands of the unbelievers. The old warrior king, Abdalla el Zagal, was still sheltered in Guadix, where he was slowly gathering together his shattered forces. When the people of Guadix heard of the danger and distress of Malaga, they urged to be led to its relief; and the alfaquis admonished El Zagal not to desert so righteous and loyal a city in its extremity. His own

warlike nature made him feel a sympathy for a place, that made so gallant a resistance; and he despatched as powerful a reinforcement as he could spare, under conduct of a chosen captain, with orders to throw themselves into the city.

Intelligence of this reinforcement reached Boabdil el Chico, in his royal palace of the Alhambra. Filled with hostility against his uncle, and desirous of proving his loyalty to the Castilian sovereigns, he immediately sent forth a superior force of horse and foot, to intercept the detachment. A sharp conflict ensued; the troops of El Zagal were routed with great loss, and fled back in confusion to Guadix.

Boabdil, not being accustomed to victories, was flushed with this melancholy triumph. He sent tidings of it to the Castilian sovereigns, accompanied with rich silks, boxes of Arabian perfume, a cup of gold richly wrought, and a female captive of Rebeda, as presents to the queen; and four Arabian steeds, magnificently caparisoned, a sword and dagger richly mounted, and several albornozes and other robes, sumptuously embroidered, for the king. He entreated them, at the same time, always to look upon him with favour, as their devoted vassal.

Boabdil was fated to be unfortunate even in his victories. His defeat of the forces of his uncle, destined to the relief of unhappy Malaga, shocked the feelings, and cooled the loyalty of many of his best adherents. The mere men of traffic might rejoice in their golden interval of peace, but the chivalrous spirits of Granada spurned a security purchased by such sacrifices of pride and affection. The people at large, having gratified their love of change, began to question whether they had acted generously by their old fighting monarch. "El Zagal," said they, "was fierce and bloody, but then he was true to his country: he was an usurper, but then he maintained the glory of the crown which he usurped. If his sceptre was a rod of iron to his subjects, it was a sword of steel against their enemies. This Boabdil sacrifices religion, friends, country, everything, to a mere shadow of royalty, and is content to hold a rush for a sceptre."

These factious murmurs soon reached the ears of Boabdil, and he apprehended another of his customary reverses. He sent in all haste to the Castilian sovereigns, beseeching military aid to keep him on his throne. Ferdinand graciously complied with a request so much in unison with his policy.

A detachment of one thousand cavalry, and two thousand infantry, were despatched, under the command of Don Fernandez Gonsalez, of Cordova, subsequently renowned as the grand captain. With this succour, Boabdil expelled from the city all those who were hostile to him, and in favour of his uncle. He felt secure in these troops, from their being distinct, in manners, language, and religion, from his subjects, and compromised with his pride, in thus exhibiting that most unnatural and humiliating of all regal spectacles, a monarch supported on his throne by foreign weapons, and by soldiers hostile to his people.

Nor was Boabdil el Chico the only Moorish sovereign that sought protection from Ferdinand and Isabella. A splendid galley, with lateen sails, and several banks of oars, came one day into the harbour of Malaga, displaying the standard of the crescent, but likewise a white flag in sign of amity. An ambassador landed from it within the Christian lines. He came from the King of Tremezan, and brought presents similar to those of Boabdil, consisting of Arabian coursers, bits, stirrups, and other furniture of gold, together with costly Moorish mantles: for the queen there were sumptuous shawls, robes, and silken stuffs, ornaments of gold, and exquisite oriental perfumes.

The King of Tremezan had been alarmed at the rapid conquests of the Spanish arms, and startled by the descent of several Spanish cruisers on the coast of Africa. He craved to be considered a vassal to the Castilian sovereigns, and that they would extend such favour and security to his ships and subjects as had been shown to other Moors, who had submitted to their sway. He requested a painting of their arms, that he and his subjects might recognise and respect their standard, whenever they encountered it. At the same time he implored their clemency towards unhappy Malaga, and that its inhabitants might experience the same favour that had been shown towards the Moors of other captured cities.

This embassy was graciously received by the Castilian sovereigns. They granted the protection required; ordering their commanders to respect the flag of Tremezan, unless it should be found rendering assistance to the enemy. They sent also to the Barbary monarch their royal arms, moulded in escutcheons of gold a hand's-breadth in size.*

* Cura de los Palacios, c. 84. Pulgar, part. iii. c. 86.

While thus the chances of assistance from without daily decreased, famine raged in the city. The inhabitants were compelled to eat the flesh of horses, and many died of hunger. What made the sufferings of the citizens the more intolerable was, to behold the sea covered with ships, daily arriving with provisions for the besiegers. Day after day, also, they saw herds of fat cattle and flocks of sheep drawn into the camp. Wheat and flour were piled in large mounds in the centre of the encampments, glaring in the sunshine, and tantalizing the wretched citizens, who, while they and their children were perishing with hunger, beheld prodigal abundance reigning within a bowshot of their walls.

CHAPTER LVIII.

There lived at this time, in a hamlet in the neighbourhood of Guadix, an ancient Moor, of the name of Abraham Algerbi. He was a native of Guerba, in the kingdom of Tunis, and had for several years led the life of a santon or hermit. The hot sun of Africa had dried his blood, and rendered him of an exalted yet melancholy temperament. He passed most of his time in meditation, prayer, and rigorous abstinence, until his body was wasted and his mind bewildered, and he fancied himself favoured with divine revelations. The Moors, who have a great reverence for all enthusiasts of the kind, looked upon him as inspired, listened to all his ravings as veritable prophecies, and denominated him El Santo, or "the saint."

The woes of the kingdom of Granada had long exasperated the gloomy spirit of this man; and he had beheld with indignation this beautiful country wrested from the dominion of the faithful, and becoming a prey to the unbelievers. He had implored the blessing of Allah on the troops which issued forth from Guadix, for the relief of Malaga; but when he saw them return, routed and scattered by their own countrymen, he retired to his cell, shut himself up from the world, and was plunged for a time in the blackest gloom.

On a sudden he made his appearance again in the streets of Guadix; his face haggard, his form emaciated, but his eye beaming with fire. He said, that Allah had sent an angel to him, in the solitude of his cell, revealing to him a mode of delivering Malaga from its perils, and striking horror and confusion into the camp of the unbelievers. The Moors

listened with eager credulity to his words: four hundred of them offered to follow him even to the death, and to obey implicitly his commands. Of this number many were Gomeres, anxious to relieve their countrymen, who formed part of the garrison of Malaga.

They traversed the kingdom by the wild and lonely passes of the mountains, concealing themselves in the day, and travelling only in the night, to elude the Christian scouts. At length they arrived at the mountains which tower above Malaga; and, looking down, beheld the city completely invested, a chain of encampments extending round it from shore to shore, and a line of ships blockading it by sea, while the continual thunder of artillery, and the smoke rising in various parts, showed that the siege was pressed with great activity. The hermit scanned the encampments warily from his lofty height. He saw that the part of the encampment of the Marquis of Cadiz, which was at the foot of the height, and on the margin of the sea, was the most assailable, the rocky soil not admitting ditches or palisadoes. Remaining concealed all day, he descended with his followers at night to the seacoast, and approached silently to the outworks. He had given them their instructions: they were to rush suddenly upon the camp, fight their way through, and throw themselves into the city.

It was just at the gray of the dawning, when objects are obscurely visible, that they made this desperate attempt. Some sprang suddenly upon the sentinels: others rushed into the sea, and got round the works: others clambered over the breastworks. There was sharp skirmishing; a great part of the Moors were cut to pieces, but about two hundred succeeded in getting into the gates of Malaga.

The santon took no part in the conflict, nor did he endeavour to enter the city. His plans were of a different nature. Drawing apart from the battle, he threw himself on his knees, on a rising ground, and, lifting his hands to Heaven, appeared to be absorbed in prayer. The Christians, as they were searching for fugitives in the clefts of the rocks, found him at his devotions. He stirred not at their approach, but remained fixed as a statue, without changing colour or moving a muscle. Filled with surprize, not unmixed with awe, they took him to the Marquis of Cadiz. He was wrapped in a coarse albornoz, or Moorish mantle; his beard was long and grizzled, and

there was something wild and melancholy in his look, that inspired curiosity.

On being examined, he gave himself out as a saint, to whom Allah had revealed the events, that were to take place in that siege. The marquis demanded when and how Malaga was to be taken. He replied, that he knew full well; but he was forbidden to reveal these important secrets, except to the king and queen. The good marquis was not more given to superstitious fancies than other commanders of his time; yet there seemed something singular and mysterious about this man: he might have some important intelligence to communicate; so he was persuaded to send him to the king and queen. He was conducted to the royal tent, surrounded by a curious multitude, exclaiming "El Moro Santo!" for the news had spread through the camp, that they had taken a Moorish prophet.

The king, having dined, was taking his siesta, or afternoon's sleep, in his tent; and the queen, though curious to see this singular being, yet, from a natural delicacy and reserve, delayed until the king should be present. He was taken, therefore, to an adjoining tent, in which were Doña Beatrix de Bovadilla, Marchioness of Moya, and Don Alvaro of Portugal, son of the Duke of Braganza, with two or three attendants. The Moor, ignorant of the Spanish tongue, had not understood the conversation of the guards, and supposed, from the magnificence of the furniture and the silken hangings, that this was the royal tent. From the respect paid by the attendants to Don Alvaro and the marchioness, he concluded, that they were the king and queen.

He now asked for a draught of water. A jar was brought to him, and the guard released his arm, to enable him to drink. The marchioness perceived a sudden change in his countenance, and something sinister in the expression of his eye, and shifted her position to a more remote part of the tent. Pretending to raise the water to his lips, the Moor unfolded his albornoz so as to grasp a cimeter, which he wore concealed beneath; then, dashing down the jar, he drew his weapon, and gave Don Alvaro a blow on the head, that struck him to the earth and nearly deprived him of life. Turning upon the marchioness, he then made a violent blow at her, but, in his eagerness and agitation, his cimeter caught in the drapery of the tent; the force of the blow was broken, and

the weapon struck harmless upon some golden ornaments of her head-dress.*

Ruy Lopez de Toledo, treasurer to the queen, and Juan de Belalcazar, a sturdy friar, who were present, grappled and struggled with the desperado; and immediately the guards who had conducted him from the Marquis of Cadiz fell upon him, and cut him to pieces.†

The king and queen, brought out of their tents by the noise, were filled with horror, when they learned the imminent peril from which they had escaped. The mangled body of the Moor was taken by the people of the camp, and thrown into the city from a catapult. The Gomeres gathered up the body, with deep reverence, as the remains of a saint; they washed and perfumed it, and buried it with great honour and loud lamentations. In revenge of his death, they slew one of their principal Christian captives; and, having tied his body upon an ass, they drove the animal forth into the camp.

From this time there was appointed an additional guard around the tents of the king and queen, composed of twelve hundred cavaliers of rank of the kingdoms of Castile and Arragon. No person was admitted to the royal presence armed. No Moor was allowed to enter the camp without a previous knowledge of his character and business; and on no account was any Moor to be introduced into the presence of the sovereigns.

An act of treachery of such a ferocious nature gave rise to a train of gloomy apprehensions. There were many cabins and sheds about the camp, constructed of branches of trees, which had become dry and combustible; and fears were entertained, that they might be set on fire by the Mudixares, or Moorish vassals, who visited the army. Some even dreaded, that attempts might be made to poison the wells and fountains. To quiet these dismal alarms, all Mudixares were ordered to leave the camp; and all loose loiterers, who could not give a good account of themselves, were taken into custody.

CHAPTER LIX.

Among those followers of the santon that had effected their entrance into the city was a dark African, of the tribe of

* Pietro Martyr, epist. 62. † Cura de los Palacios.

Gomeres, who was likewise a hermit or dervise, and passed among the Moors for a holy and inspired man. No sooner were the mangled remains of his predecessor buried with the honours of martyrdom, than this dervise elevated himself in his' place, and professed to be gifted with the spirit of prophecy. He displayed a white banner, which he assured the Moors was sacred; that he had retained it for twenty years, for some signal purpose; and that Allah had revealed to him, that under that banner, the inhabitants of Malaga should sally forth upon the camp of the unbelievers, put it to utter rout, and banquet upon the provisions in which it abounded.* The hungry and credulous Moors were elated at this prediction, and cried out to be led forth at once to the attack; but the dervise told them the time was not yet arrived, for every event had its allotted day in the decrees of fate; they must wait patiently, therefore, until the appointed time should be revealed to him by Heaven. Hamet el Zegri listened to the dervise with profound reverence, and his example had great effect in increasing the awe and deference of his followers. He took the holy man up into his stronghold of Gibralfaro, consulted him on all occasions, and hung out his white banner on the loftiest tower, as a signal of encouragement to the people of the city.

In the meantime, the prime chivalry of Spain was gradually assembling before the walls of Malaga. The army which had commenced the siege had been worn out by extreme hardships, having had to construct immense works, to dig trenches and mines, to mount guard by sea and land, to patrole the mountains, and to sustain incessant conflicts. The sovereigns were obliged, therefore to call upon various distant cities for reinforcements of horse and foot. Many nobles, also, assembled their vassals, and repaired, of their own accord, to the royal camp.

Every little while, some stately galley or gallant caravel would stand into the harbour, displaying the well-known banner of some Spanish cavalier, and thundering from its artillery a salutation to the sovereigns, and a defiance to the Moors. On the land side also reinforcements would be seen, winding down the mountains to the sound of drum and trumpet, and marching into the camp with glistening arms, as yet unsullied by the toils of war.

* Cura de los Palacios.

One morning the whole sea was whitened by the sails, and vexed by the oars of ships and galleys bearing towards the port. One hundred vessels, of various kinds and sizes, arrived; some armed for warlike service, others deep freighted with provisions. At the same time, the clangor of drum and trumpet bespoke the arrival of a powerful force by land, which came pouring in lengthening columns into the camp.

This mighty reinforcement was furnished by the Duke of Medina Sidonia, who reigned like a petty monarch over his vast possessions. He came with this princely force a volunteer to the royal standard, not having been summoned by the sovereigns, and he brought morever a loan of twenty thousand doblas of gold.

When the camp was thus powerfully reinforced, Isabella advised that new offers of an indulgent kind should be made to the inhabitants; for she was anxious to prevent the miseries of a protracted siege, or the effusion of blood that must attend a general attack. A fresh summons was therefore sent for the city to surrender, with a promise of life, liberty, and property, in case of immediate compliance, but denouncing all the horrors of war if the defence were obstinately continued.

Hamet el Zegri again rejected the offer with scorn. His main fortifications as yet were but little impaired, and were capable of holding out much longer; he trusted to the thousand evils and accidents that beset a besieging army, and to the inclemencies of the approaching season; and it is said he, as well as his followers, had an infatuated belief in the predictions of the dervise.

The worthy Fray Antonio Agapida does not scruple to affirm that the pretended prophet of the city was an arch necromancer, or Moorish magician, "of which there be countless many," says he, "in the filthy sect of Mahomet;" and that he was leagued with the prince of the powers of the air, to endeavour to work the confusion and defeat of the Christian army. The worthy father asserts also, that Hamet employed him in a high tower of the Gibralfaro, which commanded a wide view over sea and land, where he wrought spells and incantations, with astrolabes and other diabolical instruments, to defeat the Christian ships and forces, whenever they were engaged with the Moors.

To the potent spells of this sorcerer he ascribes the perils and losses sustained by a party of cavaliers of the royal

household, in a desperate combat to gain two towers of the suburb, near the gate of the city called La Puerta de Granada. The Christians, led on by Ruy Lopez de Toledo, the valiant treasurer of the queen, took, and lost, and retook the towers, which were finally set on fire by the Moors, and abandoned to the flames by both parties. To the same malignant influence he attributes the damage done to the Christian fleet, which was so vigorously assailed by the albatozas, or floating batteries, of the Moors, that one ship of the Duke of Medina Sidonia was sunk, and the rest were obliged to retire.

"Hamet el Zegri," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "stood on the top of the high tower of Gibralfaro, and beheld this injury wrought upon the Christian force; and his proud heart was puffed up. And the Moorish necromancer stood beside him. And he pointed out to him the Christian host below, encamped on every eminence around the city, and covering its fertile valley, and the many ships floating upon the tranquil sea; and he bade him be strong of heart, for that, in a few days, all this mighty fleet would be scattered by the winds of heaven; and that he should sally forth, under guidance of the sacred banner, and attack this host, and utterly defeat it, and make spoil of those sumptuous tents; and Malaga should be triumphantly revenged upon her assailants. So the heart of Hamet was hardened like that of Pharaoh, and he persisted in setting at defiance the Catholic sovereigns and their army of saintly warriors."

CHAPTER LX.

Seeing the infatuated obstinacy of the besieged, the Christians now approached their works to the walls, gaining one position after another, preparatory to a general assault. Near the barrier of the city was a bridge with four arches, defended at each end by a strong and lofty tower, by which a part of the army would have to pass in making a general attack. The commander-in-chief of the artillery, Francisco Ramirez de Madrid, was ordered to take possession of this bridge. The approach to it was perilous in the extreme, from the exposed situation of the assailants, and the numbers of Moors that garrisoned the towers. Francisco Ramirez, therefore, secretly excavated a mine leading beneath the first tower, and placed a piece of ordnance, with its mouth upwards,

immediately under the foundation, with a train of powder to produce an explosion at the necessary moment.

When this was arranged, he advanced slowly with his forces in the face of the towers, erecting bulwarks at every step, and gradually gaining ground, until he arrived near to the bridge. He then planted several pieces of artillery in his works, and began to batter the tower. The Moors replied bravely from their battlements; but in the heat of the combat the piece of ordnance under the foundation was discharged. The earth was rent open, a part of the tower overthrown, and several of the Moors torn to pieces: the rest took to flight, overwhelmed with terror at this thundering explosion bursting beneath their feet, and at beholding the earth vomiting flames and smoke; for never before had they witnessed such a stratagem in warfare. The Christians rushed forward and took possession of the abandoned post, and immediately commenced an attack upon the other tower, at the opposite end of the bridge, to which the Moors had retired. An incessant fire of crossbows and arquebuses was kept up between the rival towers, volleys of stones were discharged, and no one dared to venture upon the intermediate bridge.

Francisco de Ramirez at length renewed his former mode of approach, making bulwarks as he advanced, while the Moors at the other end swept the bridge with their artillery. The combat was long and bloody, ferocious on the part of the Moors, patient and persevering on the part of the Christians. By slow degrees they accomplished their progress across the bridge, drove the enemy before them, and remained masters of this important pass.

For this valiant and skilful achievement, King Ferdinand, after the surrender of the city, conferred the dignity of knighthood upon Francisco Ramirez, in the tower which he had so gloriously gained.* The worthy padre, Fray Antonio Agapida, indulges in more than a page of extravagant eulogy upon this invention of blowing up the foundation of the tower by a piece of ordnance, which he affirms to be the first instance on record of gunpowder being used in a mine.

CHAPTER LXI.

WHILE the dervise was deluding the garrison of Malaga

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 91.

with vain hopes, the famine increased to a terrible degree. The Gomeres ranged about the city as though it had been a conquered place; taking by force whatever they found eatable in the houses of the peaceful citizens, and breaking open vaults and cellars, and demolishing walls, wherever they thought provisions might be concealed.

The wretched inhabitants had no longer bread to eat; the horseflesh also now failed them; and they were fain to devour skins and hides toasted at the fire, and to assuage the hunger of their children with vine leaves cut up and fried in oil. Many perished of famine, or of the unwholesome food with which they endeavoured to relieve it; and many took refuge in the Christian camp, preferring captivity to the horrors which surrounded them.

At length the sufferings of the inhabitants became so great as to conquer even their fears of Hamet and his Gomeres. They assembled before the house of Ali Dordux, the wealthy merchant, whose stately mansion was at the foot of the hill of the alcazaba; and they urged him to stand forth as their leader, and to intercede with Hamet el Zegri for a surrender. Ali Dordux was a man of courage as well as policy; he perceived also that hunger was giving boldness to the citizens, while he trusted it was subduing the fierceness of the soldiery. He armed himself, therefore, cap-à-pié, and undertook this dangerous parley with the alcayde. He associated with him an alfaqui, named Abrahen Alharis, and an important inhabitant, named Amar ben Amar; and they ascended to the fortress of Gibralfaro, followed by several of the trembling merchants.

They found Hamet el Zegri, not, as before, surrounded by ferocious guards and all the implements of war; but in a chamber of one of the lofty towers, at a table of stone, covered with scrolls, and traced with strange characters and mystic diagrams; while instruments of singular and unknown form lay about the room. Beside Hamet el Zegri stood the prophetic dervise, who appeared to have been explaining to him the mysterious inscriptions of the scrolls. His presence filled the citizens with awe; for even Ali Dordux considered him a man inspired.

The alfaqui, Abrahen Alharis, whose sacred character gave him boldness to speak, now lifted up his voice, and addressed Hamet el Zegri. "We implore you," said he solemnly, "in the name of the most powerful God, no longer to persist in

a vain resistance, which must end in our destruction; but deliver up the city, while clemency is yet to be obtained. Think how many of our warriors have fallen by the sword; do not suffer those who survive to perish by famine. Our wives and children cry to us for bread, and we have none to give them. We see them expire in lingering agony before our eyes, while the enemy mocks our misery, by displaying the abundance of his camp. Of what avail is our defence? Are our walls, peradventure, more strong than the walls of Ronda? Are our warriors more brave than the defenders of Loxa? The walls of Ronda were thrown down, and the warriors of Loxa had to surrender. Do we hope for succour? From whence are we to receive it? The time for hope has gone by. Granada has lost its power: it no longer possesses chivalry, commanders, or a king. Boabdil sits a vassal in the degraded walls of the Alhambra: El Zagal is a fugitive, shut up within the walls of Guadix. The kingdom is divided against itself: its strength is gone, its pride fallen, its very existence at an end. In the name of Allah, we conjure thee, who art our captain, be not our direst enemy; but surrender these ruins of our once happy Malaga, and deliver us from these overwhelming horrors."

Such was the supplication forced from the inhabitants by the extremity of their sufferings. Hamet el Zegri listened to the alfaqui without anger, for he respected the sanctity of his office. His heart, too, was at that moment lifted up with a vain confidence. "Yet a few days of patience," said he, "and all these evils will suddenly have an end. I have been conferring with this holy man, and find, that the time of our deliverance is at hand. The decrees of fate are inevitable: it is written in the book of destiny, that we shall sally forth, and destroy the camp of the unbelievers, and banquet upon those mountains of grain, which are piled up in the midst of it. So Allah hath promised, by the mouth of this his prophet. Allah achbar! God is great! Let no man oppose the decrees of Heaven."

The citizens heard with proud reverence; for no true Moslem pretends to struggle against whatever is written in the book of fate. Ali Dordux, who had come prepared to champion the city, and to brave the ire of Hamet, humbled himself before this holy man; and gave faith to his prophecies as the revelations of Allah. So the deputies returned to the citizens,

and exhorted them to be of good cheer. "A few days longer," said they, "and our sufferings are to terminate. When the white banner is removed from the tower, then look out for deliverance; for the hour of sallying forth will have arrived." The people retired to their houses with sorrowful hearts. They tried in vain to quiet the cries of their famishing children; and day by day, and hour by hour, their anxious eyes were turned to the sacred banner, which still continued to wave on the tower of Gibralfaro.

CHAPTER LXII.

"The Moorish necromancer," observes the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida, "remained shut up in the tower of the Gibralfaro, devising devilish means to work mischief and discomfiture upon the Christians. He was daily consulted by Hamet el Zegri, who had great faith in those black and magic arts, which he had brought with him from the bosom of heathen Africa."

From the account given of this dervise and his incantations by the worthy father, it would appear, that he was an astrologer, and was studying the stars, and endeavouring to calculate the day and hour, when a successful attack might be made upon the Christian camp.

Famine had now increased to such a degree as to distress even the garrison of Gibralfaro; although the Gomeres had seized upon all the provisions they could find in the city. Their passions were sharpened by hunger; and they became restless and turbulent, and impatient for action.

Hamet el Zegri was one day in council with his captains, perplexed by the pressure of events, when the dervise entered among them. "The hour of victory," exclaimed he, "is at hand! Allah has commanded, that to-morrow morning ye shall sally forth to the fight. I will bear before you the sacred banner, and deliver your enemies into your hands. Remember, however, that ye are but instruments in the hands of Allah, to take vengeance on the enemies of the faith. Go into battle, therefore, with pure hearts, forgiving each other all past offences; for those, who are charitable towards each other, will be victorious over the foe."

The words of the dervise were received with rapture. All Gibralfaro and the alcazaba resounded immediately with the

din of arms; and Hamet sent throughout the towers and fortifications of the city, and selected the choicest troops and most distinguished captains for this eventful combat.

In the morning early, the rumour went throughout the city, that the sacred banner had disappeared from the tower of Gibralfaro, and all Malaga was roused to witness the sally that was to destroy the unbelievers. Hamet descended from his strong-hold, accompanied by his principal captain, Abrahen Zenete, and followed by his Gomeres. The dervise led the way, displaying the white banner, the sacred pledge of victory. The multitude shouted, "Allah achbar!" and prostrated themselves before the banner as it passed. Even the dreaded Hamet was hailed with praises; for, in their hope of speedy relief, through the prowess of his arm, the populace forgot everything but his bravery. Every bosom in Malaga was agitated by hope and fear; the old men, the women, and children, and all who went not forth to battle, mounted on tower, and battlement, and roof, to watch a combat, that was to decide their fate.

Before sallying forth from the city, the dervise addressed the troops, reminding them of the holy nature of this enterprise, and warning them not to forget the protection of the sacred banner by any unworthy act. They were to press forward, fighting valiantly, and granting no quarter. The gate was then thrown open, and the dervise issued forth, followed by the army. They directed their assault upon the encampments of the master of Santiago and the master of Calatrava, and came upon them so suddenly, that they killed and wounded several of the guards. Abrahen Zenete made his way into one of the tents, where he beheld several Christian striplings, just starting from their slumber. The heart of the Moor was suddenly touched with pity for their youth, or, perhaps, he scorned the weakness of the foe: he smote them with the flat, instead of the edge, of his sword. "Away, imps," cried he, "away to your mothers!" The fanatic dervise reproached him with his clemency. "I did not kill them," replied Zenete, "because I saw no beards!"*

The alarm was given in the camp, and the Christians rushed from all quarters to defend the gates of the bulwarks. Don Pedro Puertocarrero, senior of Moguer, and his brother, Don Alonzo Pacheco, planted themselves, with their followers, in

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 84.

the gateway of the encampment of the master of Santiago, and bore the whole brunt of the battle until they were reinforced. The gate of the encampment of the master of Calatrava was, in like manner, defended by Lorenzo Saurez de Mendoza. Hamet el Zegri was furious at being thus checked, where he had expected a miraculous victory. He led his troops repeatedly to the attack, hoping to force the gates before succour should arrive. They fought with vehement ardour, but were as often repulsed; and every time they returned to the assault, they found their enemies doubled in number. The Christians opened a cross fire of all kinds of missiles from their bulwarks; the Moors could effect but little damage upon a foe thus protected behind their works, while they themselves were exposed from head to foot. The Christians singled out the most conspicuous cavaliers, the greater part of whom were either slain or wounded. Still the Moors, infatuated by the predictions of the prophet, fought desperately and devotedly; and they were furious to revenge the slaughter of their leaders. They rushed upon certain death, endeavouring madly to scale the bulwarks, or force the gates; and fell amidst showers of darts and lances, filling the ditches with their mangled bodies.

Hamet el Zegri raged along the front of the bulwarks, seeking an opening for attack. He gnashed his teeth with fury, as he saw so many of his chosen warriors slain around him. He seemed to have a charmed life; for, though constantly in the hottest of the fight, amidst showers of missiles, he still escaped uninjured. Blindly confiding in the prophecy of victory, he continued to urge on his devoted troops. The dervise, too, ran like a maniac through the ranks, waving his white banner, and inciting the Moors, by howlings rather than by shouts. In the midst of his frenzy, a stone from a catapult struck him on the head, and dashed out his bewildered brains.*

When the Moors beheld their prophet slain, and his banner in the dust, they were seized with despair, and fled in confusion to the city. Hamet el Zegri made some effort to rally them, but was himself confounded by the fall of the dervise. He covered the flight of his broken forces, turning repeatedly upon their pursuers, and slowly making his retreat into the city.

The inhabitants of Malaga witnessed from their walls, with

* Garibay, lib. xviii. cap. 33.

trembling anxiety, the whole of this disastrous conflict. At the first onset, on seeing the guards of the camp put to flight, they exclaimed, "Allah has given us the victory!" and they sent up shouts of triumph. Their exultation, however, was turned into doubt, when they beheld their troops repulsed in repeated attacks. They could perceive, from time to time, some distinguished warrior laid low, and others brought back bleeding to the city. When, at length, the sacred banner fell, and the routed troops came flying to the gates, pursued and cut down by the foe, horror and despair seized upon the populace.

As Hamet el Zegri entered the gates, he was greeted with loud lamentations. Mothers, whose sons had been slain, shrieked curses after him as he passed. Some, in the anguish of their hearts, threw down their famishing babes before him, exclaming, "Trample on them with thy horse's feet, for we have no food to give them, and we cannot endure their cries!" All heaped execrations on his head, as the cause of the woes of Malaga.

The warlike part of the citizens, also, and many warriors, who, with their wives and children, had taken refuge in Malaga from the mountain fortresses, now joined in the popular clamour; for their hearts were overcome by the sufferings of their families.

Hamet el Zegri found it impossible to withstand this torrent of lamentations, curses, and reproaches. His military ascendancy was at an end; for most of his officers, and the prime warriors of his African band, had fallen in this disastrous sally. Turning his back, therefore, upon the city, and abandoning it to its own councils, he retired, with the remnant of his Gomeres, to his strong-hold in the Gibralfaro.

CHAPTER LXIII.

The people of Malaga, being no longer overawed by Hamet el Zegri and his Gomeres, turned to Ali Dordux, the magnanimous merchant, and put the fate of the city into his hands. He had already gained the alcaydes of the castle of the Genoese and of the citadel into his party; and, in the late confusion, had gained the sway over these important fortresses. He now associated himself with the alfaqui, Abrahen Alhariz, and four of the principal inhabitants; and, forming

a provisional junta, they sent heralds to the Christian sovereigns, offering to surrender the city on certain terms, protecting the persons and property of the inhabitants, permitting them to reside as mudaxares, or tributary vassals, either in Malaga or elsewhere.

When these heralds arrived at the camp, and made known their mission, the anger of Ferdinand was kindled. "Return to your fellow-citizens," said he, "and tell them, that the day of grace is gone by. They have persisted in a fruitless defence, until they are driven by necessity to capitulate: they must surrender unconditionally, and abide the fate of the vanquished. Those who merit death shall suffer death; those who merit captivity shall be made captives."

This stern reply spread consternation among the people of Malaga; but Ali Dordux comforted them, and undertook to go in person, and pray for favourable terms. When the people beheld this great merchant, who was so eminent in their city, departing with his associates on this mission, they plucked up heart, for they said, "Surely the Christian king will not turn a deaf ear to such a man as Ali Dordux!"

Ferdinand, however, would not even admit the ambassadors to his presence. "Send them to the devil," said he, in a great passion, to the commander of Leon. "I will not see them. Let them get back to their city. They shall all surrender to my mercy as vanquished enemies."*

To give emphasis to this reply, he ordered a general discharge from all the artillery and batteries, and there was a great shout throughout the camp, and all the lombards and catapults, and other engines, thundered furiously upon the city, doing great damage.

Ali Dordux and his companions returned with downcast countenances, and could scarce make the reply of the Christian sovereign be heard, for the roaring of the artillery, the tumbling of the walls, and the cries of women and children. The citizens were greatly astonished and dismayed, when they found the little respect paid to their most eminent man; but the warriors who were in the city exclaimed, "What has this merchant to do with questions between men of battle? Let us not address the enemy as abject suppliants, who have no power to injure; but as valiant men, who have weapons in their hands."

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 84..

So they despatched another message to the Christian sovereigns, offering to yield up the city, and all their effects, on condition of being secured in their personal liberty. Should this be denied, they declared, that they would hang from the battlements fifteen hundred Christian captives, male and female; that they would put all their old men, their women and children, into the citadel, set fire to the city, and sally forth sword in hand, to fight until the last gasp. "In this way," said they, "the Spanish sovereigns shall gain a bloody victory, and the fall of Malaga be renowned while the world endures."

Various debates now took place in the Christian camp. Many of the cavaliers were exasperated against Malaga for its long resistance, which had caused the death of many of their relations and favourite companions. It had long been a strong-hold for Moorish depredators, and the mart where most of the warriors captured in the Axarquia had been exposed in triumph, and sold to slavery. They represented, moreover, that there were many Moorish cities yet to be besieged; and that an example ought to be made of Malaga, to prevent all obstinate resistance hereafter. They advised, therefore, that all the inhabitants should be put to the sword!*

The humane heart of Isabella revolted at such sanguinary councils. She insisted, that their triumph should not be disgraced by cruelty. Ferdinand, however, was inflexible in refusing to grant any preliminary terms; insisting on an unconditional surrender. The people of Malaga now abandoned themselves to paroxysms of despair. On the one side, they saw famine and death; on the other, slavery and chains. The mere men of the sword, who had no families to protect, were loud for signalizing their fall by some illustrious action. "Let us sacrifice our Christian captives, and then destroy ourselves!" cried some. "Let us put all the women and children to death, set fire to the city, fall on the Christian camp, and die sword in hand!" cried others.

Ali Dordux gradually made his voice be heard amidst the general clamour. He addressed himself to the principal inhabitants, and those who had children. "Let those who live by the sword die by the sword," cried he, "but let us not follow their desperate councils. Who knows what sparks of

* Pulgar.

pity may be awakened in the bosoms of the Christian sovereigns, when they behold our unoffending wives and daughters, and our helpless little ones! The Christian queen, they say, is full of mercy."

At these words the hearts of the unhappy people of Malaga yearned over their families; and they empowered Ali Dordux to deliver up the city to the mercy of the Castilian sovereigns.

The merchant now went to and fro, and had several communications with Ferdinand and Isabella; and interested several principal cavaliers in his cause. And he sent rich presents to the king and queen, of oriental merchandises, silks, and stuffs of gold, and jewels, and precious stones, and spices, and perfumes, and many other rare and sumptuous things, which he had accumulated in his great tradings with the East; and he gradually found favour in the eyes of the sovereigns.* Finding that there was nothing to be obtained for the city, he now, like a prudent man and able merchant, began to negociate for himself and his immediate friends.

He represented, that, from the first, they had been desirous of yielding up the city; but had been prevented by warlike and high-handed men, who had threatened their lives. He entreated, therefore, that mercy might be extended to them, and that they might not be confounded with the guilty.

The sovereigns had accepted the presents of Ali Dordux: how could they turn a deaf ear to his petition? So they granted a pardon to him, and to forty families which he named; and it was agreed, that they should be protected in their lives and property, and permitted to reside in Malaga as Mudaxares or Moslem vassals; and to follow their customary pursuits.† All this being arranged, Ali Dordux delivered up twenty of the principal inhabitants, to remain as hostages until the whole city should be placed in the possession of the Christians.

Don Gutiere de Cardeñas, senior commander of Leon, now entered the city, armed cap-à-piè, on horseback, and took possession, in the name of the Castilian sovereigns. He was followed by his retainers, and by the captains and cavaliers of the army; and in a little while the standards of the cross, and of the blessed Santiago, and of the Catholic sovereigns, were elevated on the principal tower of the alcazaba. When these standards were beheld from the camp, the queen, and

* MS. Chron. of Valera. † Cura de los Palacios.

the princess, and the ladies of the court, and all the royal retinue, knelt down, and gave thanks and praises to the Holy Virgin, and to Santiago, for this great triumph of the faith; and the bishops, and other clergy who were present, and the choristers of the royal chapel, chanted *Te Deum laudamus*, and *Gloria in excelsis*.

CHAPTER LXIV.

No sooner was the city delivered up, than the wretched inhabitants implored permission to purchase bread for themselves and their children, from the heaps of grain, which they had so often gazed at wistfully from their walls. Their prayer was granted; and they issued forth, with the famished eagerness of starving men. It was piteous to behold the struggles of these unhappy people, as they contended who first should have their necessities relieved.

"Thus," says the pious Fray Antonio Agapida, "thus are the predictions of false prophets sometimes permitted to be verified; but always to the confusion of those who trust in them; for the words of the Moorish necromancer came to pass, that they should eat of those heaps of bread; but they ate of them in humiliation and defeat, and with sorrow and bitterness of heart."

Dark and fierce were the feelings of Hamet el Zegri, as he looked down from the castle of Gibralfaro, and beheld the Christian legions pouring into the city, and the standard of the cross supplanting the crescent on the citadel. "The people of Malaga," said he, "have trusted to a man of trade, and he has trafficked them away; but let us not suffer ourselves to be bound, hand and foot, and delivered up as part of his bargain. We have yet strong walls around us, and trusty weapons in our hands. Let us fight until buried beneath the last tumbling tower of Gibralfaro; or, rushing down from among its ruins, carry havoc among the unbelievers, as they throng the streets of Malaga!"

The fierceness of the Gomeres, however, was broken. They could have died in the breach, had their castle been assailed; but the slow advances of famine subdued their strength without rousing their passions, and sapped the force both of soul and body. They were almost unanimous for a surrender.

It was a hard struggle for the proud spirit of Hamet, to

bow itself to ask for terms. Still he trusted, that the valour of his defence would gain him respect in the eyes of a chivalrous foe. "Ali," said he, "has negociated like a merchant: I will capitulate as a soldier." He sent a herald, therefore, to Ferdinand, offering to yield up his castle, but demanding a separate treaty. The Castilian sovereign sent a laconic and stern reply: "He shall receive no terms, but such as have been granted to the community of Malaga."

For two days Hamet el Zegri remained brooding in his castle, after the city was in possession of the Christians. At length, the clamours of his followers compelled him to surrender. When the broken remnant of this fierce African garrison descended from their cragged fortress, they were so worn by watchfulness, famine, and battle, yet carried such a lurking fury in their eyes, that they looked more like fiends than men. They were all condemned to slavery, excepting Abrahen Zenete. The instance of clemency which he had shown, in refraining to harm the Spanish striplings on the last sally from Malaga, won him favourable terms. It was cited as a magnanimous act by the Spanish cavaliers; and all admitted, that, though a Moor in blood, he possessed the Christian heart of a Castilian hidalgo.*

As to Hamet el Zegri, on being asked, what moved him to such hardened obstinacy, he replied, "When I undertook my command, I pledged myself to fight, in defence of my faith, my city, and my sovereign, until slain or made prisoner; and, depend upon it, had I had men to stand by me, I should have died fighting, instead of thus tamely surrendering myself without a weapon in my hand."

"Such," says the pious Fray Antonio Agapida, "were the diabolical hatred, and stiff-necked opposition, of this infidel to our holy cause. But he was justly served by our most Catholic and high-minded sovereign, for his pertinacious defence of the city; for Ferdinand ordered, that he should be loaded with chains, and thrown into a dungeon."†

CHAPTER LXVI.

One of the first cares of the conquerers, on entering Malaga, was to search for Christian captives. Nearly sixteen hundred, men and women, were found, and among

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 84. † Pulgar, Cronica.

them were persons of distinction. Some of them had been ten, fifteen, and twenty years in captivity. Many had been servants to the Moors, or labourers on public works, and some had passed their time in chains and dungeons. Preparations were made to celebrate their deliverance as a Christian triumph. A tent was erected, not far from the city, and furnished with an altar, and all the solemn decorations of a chapel. Here the king and queen waited to receive the Christian captives. They were assembled in the city, and marshalled forth in piteous procession. Many of them had still the chains and shackles on their legs. They were wasted with famine, their hair and beards overgrown and matted, and their faces pale and haggard from long confinement. When they beheld themselves restored to liberty, and surrounded by their countrymen, some stared wildly about, as if in a dream, others gave way to frantic transports, but most of them wept for joy. All present were moved to tears by so touching a spectacle. When the procession arrived at what is called the Gate of Granada, it was met by a great concourse from the camp, with crosses and pennons, who turned and followed the captives, singing hymns of praise and thanksgiving. When they came in presence of the king and queen, they threw themselves on their knees, and would have kissed their feet, as their saviours and deliverers; but the sovereigns prevented such humiliation, and graciously extended to them their hands. They then prostrated themselves before the altar, and all present joined them in giving thanks to God, for their liberation from this cruel bondage. By orders of the king and queen, their chains were then taken off, and they were clad in decent raiment, and food was set before them. After they had ate and drank, and were refreshed and invigorated, they were provided with money, and all things necessary for their journey, and sent joyfully to their homes.

While the old chroniclers dwell with becoming enthusiasm on this pure and affecting triumph of humanity, they go, in a strain of equal eulogy, to describe a spectacle of a different nature. It so happened, that there were found in the city twelve of those renegado Christians, who had deserted to the Moors, and conveyed false intelligence during the siege. A barbarous species of punishment was inflicted upon them, borrowed, it is said, from the Moors, and peculiar to these wars. They were tied to stakes, in a public place, and

horsemen exercised their skill in transpiercing them with pointed reeds, hurled at them while careering at full speed, until the miserable victims expired beneath their wounds. Several apostate Moors, also, who, having embraced Christianity, had afterwards relapsed into their early faith, and had taken refuge in Malaga from the vengeance of the Inquisition, were publicly burnt. "These," says an old Jesuit historian, exultingly, "these were the tilts of reeds; and the illuminations most pleasing for this victorious festival, and for the catholic piety of our sovereigns!"*

When the city was cleansed from the impurities and offensive odours which had collected during the siege, the bishops, and other clergy who accompanied the court, and the choir of the royal chapel, walked in procession to the principal mosque, which was consecrated, and entitled Santa Maria de la Incarnacion. This done, the king and queen entered the city, accompanied by the grand cardinal of Spain, and the principal nobles and cavaliers of the army, and heard a solemn mass. The church was then elevated into a cathedral, and Malaga was made a bishopric, and many of the neighbouring towns were comprehended in its diocese. The queen took up her residence in the alcazaba, in the apartments of her valiant treasurer, Ruy Lopez, whence she had a view of the whole city; but the king established his quarters in the warrior castle of Gibralfaro.

And now came to be considered the disposition of the Moorish prisoners. All those who were strangers in the city, and had either taken refuge there, or had entered to defend it, were at once considered slaves. They were divided into three lots. One was set apart for the service of God, in redeeming captives from bondage, either in the kingdom of Granada, or in Africa; the second lot was divided among those who had aided, either in the field or cabinet, in the present siege, according to their rank; the third was appropriated to defray, by their sale, the great expenses incurred in the reduction of the place. A hundred of the Gomeres were sent as presents to Pope Innocent VIII., and were led in triumph through the streets of Rome, and afterwards

* Los renegados fueron acanavarcados; y los conversos quemados: y estos fueron los cañas y luminarias mas alegres por la fiesta de la vitoria, para la piedad catholica de nuestros reyes. Abarca, Anales de Aragon, tom. ii. rey 30. c. 3.

converted to Christianity. Fifty Moorish maidens were sent to the Queen Joanna of Naples, sister to King Ferdinand, and thirty to the Queen of Portugal. Isabella made presents of others to the ladies of her household, and of the noble families of Spain.

Among the inhabitants of Malaga were four hundred and fifty Moorish Jews, for the most part women, speaking the Arabic language, and dressed in the Moorish fashion. These were ransomed by a wealthy Jew of Castile, farmer-general of the royal revenues derived from the Jews of Spain. He agreed to make up, within a certain time, the sum of twenty thousand doblas or pistoles of gold; all money and jewels of the captives being taken in payment. They were sent to Castile in two armed galleys.

As to the great mass of Moorish inhabitants, they implored that they might not be scattered and sold into captivity, but might be permitted to ransom themselves by an amount paid within a certain time. Upon this King Ferdinand took the advice of certain of his ablest counsellors. They said to him, if you hold out a prospect of hopeless captivity, the infidels will throw all their gold and jewels into wells and pits, and you will lose the greater part of the spoil; but if you fix a general rate of ransom, and receive their money and jewels in payment, nothing will be destroyed. The king relished greatly this advice; and it was arranged, that all the inhabitants should be ransomed at the general rate of thirty doblas or pistoles in gold for each individual, male or female, large or small; that all their gold, jewels, and other valuables, should be received immediately, in part payment of the general amount; and that the residue should be paid within eight months; that, if any of the number actually living should die in the interim, their ransom should nevertheless be claimed. If, however, the whole of the amount were not discharged at the expiration of the eight months, they should all be considered and treated as slaves.

The unfortunate Moors were eager to catch at the least hope of future liberty, and consented to these hard conditions. The most rigorous precautions were taken to exact them to the uttermost. The inhabitants were numbered by houses and families, and their names taken down. Their most precious effects were made up into parcels, and sealed and inscribed with their names; and they were ordered to

repair with them to certain large corrales or enclosures, adjoining the alcazaba, which were surrounded by high walls, and overlooked by watch-towers; to which places the cavalgadas of Christian captives had usually been driven, to be confined until the time of sale, like cattle in a market. The Moors were obliged to leave their houses, one by one; all their money, necklaces, bracelets and anklets of gold, pearl, coral, and precious stones, were taken from them at the threshold, and their persons so rigorously searched, that they carried off nothing concealed.

Then might be seen old men, and helpless women, and tender maidens, some of high birth and gentle condition, passing through the streets, heavily burdened, towards the alcazaba. As they left their homes, they smote their breasts, and wrung their hands, and raised their weeping eyes to heaven in anguish; and this is recorded as their plaint; "Oh, Malaga; city renowned and beautiful! where now is the strength of thy castles? where the grandeur of thy towers? of what avail have been thy mighty walls for the protection of thy children? Behold them driven from thy pleasant abode, doomed to drag out a life of bondage in a foreign land, and to die far from the home of their infancy! What will become of thy old men and matrons, when their grey hairs shall be no longer reverenced! what will become of thy maidens, so delicately reared, and tenderly cherished, when reduced to hard and menial servitude! Behold, thy once happy families are scattered asunder, never again to be united! Sons are separated from their fathers, husbands from their wives, and tender children from their mothers. They will bewail each other in foreign lands; but their lamentations will be the scoff of the stranger. Oh, Malaga! city of our birth! who can behold thy desolation, and not shed tears of bitterness!"*

When Malaga was completely secured, a detachment was sent against two fortresses near the sea, called Mexas and Osuna; which had frequently harassed the Christian camp. The inhabitants were threatened with the sword, unless they instantly surrendered. They claimed the same terms that had been granted to Malaga; imagining them to be, freedom of person, and security of property. Their claim was granted. They were transported to Malaga with all their

* Pulgar.

riches; and, on arriving there, were overwhelmed with consternation at finding themselves captives. "Ferdinand," observes Fray Antonio Agapida, "was a man of his word: they were shut up in the alcazaba, with the people of Malaga, and shared their fate."

The unhappy captives remained thus crowded in the court-yards of the alcazaba, like sheep in a fold, until they could be sent by sea and land to Seville. They were then distributed about in city and country, each Christian family having one or more to feed and maintain as a servant, until the term fixed for the payment of the residue of the ransom should expire. The captives had obtained permission, that several of their number should go about among the Moorish towns of the kingdom of Granada, collecting contributions to aid in the purchase of their liberties; but these towns were too much impoverished by the war, and engrossed by their own distresse , to lend a listening ear. So the time expired, without the residue of the ransom being paid; and all the captives of
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been conquered by the Christian arms. The seaport of Malaga was captured; the fierce and warlike inhabitants of the Serrania de Ronda, and the other mountain holds of the frontier, were all disarmed, and reduced to peaceful and laborious vassalage. Their haughty fortresses, which had so long overawed the valleys of Andalusia, now displayed the standard of Castile and Arragon; the watch-towers, which

crowned every height, and from which the infidels had kept a vulture eye on the Christian territories, were now either dismantled, or garrisoned with Catholic troops. "What signalized and sanctified this great triumph," adds the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida, "were the emblems of ecclesiastical domination which everywhere appeared. In every direction arose stately convents and monasteries, those fortresses of the faith, garrisoned by its spiritual soldiery of monks and friars. The sacred melody of Christian bells was again heard among the mountains, calling to early matins, or sounding the angeles at the solemn hour of evening."

While this part of the kingdom was thus reduced by the Christian sword, the central part, round the city of Granada, forming the heart of the Moorish territory, was held in vassalage of the Castilian monarch, by Boabdil, surnamed El Chico.

That unfortunate prince lost no occasion, by acts of homage, and by professions that must have been foreign to his heart, to propitiate the conquerors of his country. No sooner had he heard of the capture of Malaga, than he sent congratulations to the Catholic sovereigns, accompanied with presents of horses, richly caparisoned, for the king; and precious cloth of gold, and oriental perfumes, for the queen. His congratulations, and his presents, were received with the utmost graciousness; and the short-sighted prince, lulled by the temporary and politic forbearance of Ferdinand, flattered himself that he was securing the lasting friendship of that monarch.

The policy of Boabdil had its transient and superficial advantages. The portion of Moorish territory under his immediate sway, had a respite from the calamities of war. The husbandmen cultivated their luxuriant fields in security, and the vega of Granada once more blossomed like the rose. The merchants again carried on a gainful traffic, and the gates of the city were thronged with beasts of burden, bringing the rich products of every clime. Yet, while the people of Granada rejoiced in their teeming fields and crowded marts, they secretly despised the policy which had procured them these advantages, and held Boabdil for little better than an apostate and an unbeliever.

Muley Abdalla el Zagal was now the hope of the unconquered part of the kingdom; and every Moor, whose spirit

was not quite subdued with his fortunes, lauded the valour of the old monarch, and his fidelity to the faith, and wished success to his standard.

El Zagal, though he no longer sat enthroned in the Alhambra, yet reigned over more considerable domains than his nephew. His territories extended from the frontier of Jaen, along the borders of Murcia, to the Mediterranean, and reached into the centre of the kingdom. On the north-east he held the cities of Baza and Guadix, situate in the midst of fertile regions. He had the important seaport of Almeria, also, which at one time rivalled Granada itself in wealth and population. Besides these, his territories included a great part of the Alpuxarra mountains, which extend across the kingdom, and shoot out branches towards the sea coast. This mountainous region was a strong-hold of wealth and power. Its stern and rocky height, rising to the clouds, seemed to set invasion at defiance; yet within their rugged embraces were sheltered delightful valleys, of the happiest temperature and richest fertility. The cool springs and limpid rills, which gushed out in all parts of the mountains, and the abundant streams, which, for a great part of the year, were supplied by the Sierra Nevada, spread a perpetual verdure over the skirts and slopes of the hills, and, collecting in silver rivers in the valleys, wound along among plantations of mulberry-trees, and groves of oranges and citrons, of almonds, figs, and pomegranates. Here was produced the finest silk of Spain, which gave employment to thousands of manufacturers. The sunburnt sides of the hills, also, were covered with vineyards. The abundant herbage of the mountain ravines, and the rich pasturage of the valleys, fed vast flocks and herds; and even the arid and rocky bosoms of the heights teemed with wealth, from the mines of various metals with which they were impregnated. In a word, the Alpuxarra mountains had ever been the great source of revenue to the monarchs of Granada. Their inhabitants, also, were hardy and warlike; and a sudden summons from the Moorish king could at any time call forth fifty thousand fighting men from their rocky fortresses.

Such was the rich, but rugged, fragment of an empire, which remained under the sway of the old warrior monarch, El Zagal. The mountain barriers, by which it was locked up, had protected it from most of the ravages of war, and El

Zagal prepared himself, by strengthening every fortress, to battle fiercely for its maintenance.

The Catholic sovereigns saw that fresh troubles and toils awaited them. The war had to be carried into a new quarter, demanding immense expenditures; and new ways and means must be devised, to replenish their exhausted coffers. "As this was a holy war, however," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "and peculiarly redounded to the prosperity of the church, the clergy were full of zeal, and contributed vast sums of money and large bodies of troops. A pious fund was also produced from the first fruits of that glorious institution, the Inquisition.

"It so happened that, about this time, there were many families of wealth and dignity in the kingdoms of Arragon and Valencia, and the principality of Catalonia, whose forefathers had been Jews, but had been converted to Christianity. Notwithstanding the outward piety of these families, it was surmised, and soon came to be strongly suspected, that many of them had a secret hankering after Judaism; and it was even whispered, that some of them practised Jewish rites in private.

"The Catholic monarch," continues Agapida, "had a righteous abhorrence of all kinds of heresy, and a fervent zeal for the faith. He ordered, therefore, a strict investigation of the conduct of these pseudo-Christians. Inquisitors were sent into these provinces for the purpose, who proceeded with their accustomed zeal. The consequence was, that many families were convicted of apostasy from the Christian faith, and of the private practice of Judaism. Some, who had grace and policy sufficient to reform in time, were again received into the Christian fold, after being severely mulcted, and condemned to heavy penance; others were burnt at *auto da fé*'s, for the edification of the public; and their property was confiscated for the good of the state.

"As these Hebrews were of great wealth, and had a hereditary passion for jewelry, there was found abundant store in their possession of gold and silver, of rings, and necklaces, and strings of pearl, and coral, and precious stones: treasures easy of transportation, and wonderfully adapted for the emergencies of war. In this way," concludes the pious Agapida, "these backsliders, by the all-seeing contrivances of Providence, were made to serve the righteous cause which they

had so treacherously deserted; and their apostate wealth was sanctified by being devoted to the service of Heaven and the crown, in this holy crusade against the infidels."

It must be added, however, that these pious financial expedients received some check from the interference of Queen Isabella. Her penetrating eyes discovered, that many enormities had been committed under colour of religious zeal, and many innocent persons accused by false witnesses of apostasy, either through malice, or a hope of obtaining their wealth. She caused strict investigation, therefore, into the proceedings which had been held; many of which were reversed, and suborners punished in proportion to their guilt.*

CHAPTER LXVII.

"MULEY Abdalla el Zagal," says the venerable jesuit father, Pedro Abarca, "was the most venomous Mahometan in all Morisma;" and the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida most devoutly echoes his opinion. "Certainly," adds the latter, "none ever opposed a more heathenish and diabolical obstinacy to the holy inroads of the cross and sword."

El Zagal felt that it was necessary to do something to quicken his popularity with the people; and that nothing was more effectual than a successul inroad. The Moors loved the stirring call to arms, and a wild foray among the mountains; and delighted more in a hasty spoil, wrested with hard fighting from the Christians, than in all the steady and certain gains secured by peaceful traffic.

There reigned at this time a careless security along the frontier of Jaen. The alcaydes of the Christian fortresses were confident of the friendship of Beabdil el Chico; and they fancied his uncle too distant, and too much engrossed by his own perplexities, to think of molesting them. On a sudden, El Zagal issued out of Guadix with a chosen band, passed rapidly through the mountains which extend behind Granada, and fell, like a thunderbolt, upon the territories in the neighbourhood of Alcala la Real.

Before the alarm could be spread, and the frontier roused, he had made a wide career of destruction through the country; sacking and burning villages, sweeping off flocks and herds, and carrying away captives. The warriors of the frontier

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 100.

assembled; but El Zagal was already far on his return through the mountains; and he re-entered the gates of Guadix in triumph, his army laden with Christian spoil, and conducting an immense cavalgada. Such was one of the fierce El Zagal's preparations for the expected invasion of the Christian king; exciting the warlike spirit of his people, and gaining for himself a transient popularity.

King Ferdinand assembled his army at Murcia in the spring of 1488. He left that city on the fifth of June, with a flying camp of four thousand horse, and fourteen thousand foot. The Marquis of Cadiz led the van, followed by the adelantado of Murcia. The army entered the Moorish frontier by the seacoast, spreading terror through the land; wherever it appeared, the towns surrendered without a blow, so great was the dread of experiencing the woes which had desolated the opposite frontier. In this way, Vera, Velez el Rubico, Velez el Blanco, and many towns of inferior note, to the number of sixty, yielded at the first summons.

It was not until it approached Almeria, that the army met with resistance. This important city was commanded by the Prince Zelim, a relation of El Zagal. He led forth his Moors bravely to the encounter, and skirmished fiercely with the advance guard in the gardens near the city. King Ferdinand came up with the main body of the army, and called off his troops from the skirmish. He saw, that to attack the place with his present force was fruitless: having reconnoitred the city and its environs, therefore, against a future campaign, he retired with his army and marched towards Baza.

The old warrior, El Zagal, was himself drawn up in the city of Baza, with a powerful garrison. He felt confidence in the strength of the place, and rejoiced when he heard, that the Christian king was approaching.

In the valley in front of Baza there extended a great tract of gardens, like a continued grove, and intersected by canals and water courses. In this he stationed a powerful ambuscade of arquebusiers, and crossbowmen. The vanguard of the Christian army came marching gaily up the valley, with great sound of drum and trumpet, and led on by the Marquis of Cadiz, and the adelantado of Murcia. As they drew near, El Zagal sallied forth, with horse and foot, and attacked them, for a time with great spirit. Gradually falling back, as if pressed by their superior valour, he drew the exulting

Christians among the gardens. Suddenly the Moors in ambuscade burst from their concealment, and opened such a terrible fire in flank and rear, that many of the Christians were slain, and the rest thrown into confusion. King Ferdinand arrived in time to see the disastrous situation of his troops, and gave signal to the van-guard to retire.

El Zagal did not permit the foe to draw off unmolested. Ordering out fresh squadrons, he fell upon the rear of the retreating troops, with loud and triumphant shouts, driving them before him with dreadful havoc. The old war cry of "El Zagal! El Zagal!" was again vociferated by the Moors, and was re-echoed with transport from the walls of the city. The Christians were for a time in imminent peril of a complete rout; when fortunately the adelantado of Murcia threw himself, with a large body of horse and foot, between the pursuers and the pursued, covering the retreat of the latter, and giving them time to rally. The Moors were now attacked so vigorously in turn, that they gave over the unequal contest, and drew back slowly into the city. Many valiant cavaliers were slain in the skirmish; among the number of whom was Don Philip of Arragon, master of the chivalry of Saint George of Montesor. He was illegitimate son of the king's illegitimate brother, Don Carlos, and his death was greatly bewailed by Ferdinand. He had formerly been archbishop of Palermo; but had doffed the cassock for the cuirass; and had thus, according to Fray Antonio Agapida, gained a glorious crown of martyrdom, by falling in this holy war.

The warm reception of his advance guard, by the old warrior El Zagal, brought King Ferdinand to a pause. He encamped on the banks of the neighbouring river Guadalentin, and began to consider, whether he had acted wisely, in undertaking this campaign with his present force. His late successes had probably rendered him over confident. El Zagal had again schooled him into his characteristic caution. He saw, that the old warrior was too formidably ensconced in Baza, to be dislodged by anything except a powerful army, and battering artillery; and he feared, that, should he persist in his invasion, some disaster might befall his army, either from the enterprise of the foe, or from a pestilence which prevailed in various parts of the country.

Ferdinand retired therefore from before Baza, as he had on a former occasion from before Loxa, all the wiser for a whole-

some lesson in warfare, but by no means grateful to those who had given it; and with a solemn determination to have his revenge upon his teachers.

He now took measures for the security of the places gained in this campaign, placing in them strong garrisons, well armed and supplied, charging their alcaydes to be vigilant in their posts, and to give no rest to the enemy. The whole of the frontier was placed under the command of the brave Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero. As it was evident, from the warlike character of El Zagal, that there would be abundance of active service and hard fighting, many hidalgos and young cavaliers, eager for distinction, remained with Puerto Carrero.

All these dispositions being made, King Ferdinand closed the dubious campaign of this year; not, as usual, by returning in triumph, at the head of his army, to some important city of his dominions; but by disbanding the troops, and repairing to pray at the cross of Caravaca.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

"WHILE the pious King Ferdinand," observes Fray Antonio Agapida, "was humbling himself before the cross, and devoutly praying for the destruction of his enemies, that fierce pagan, El Zagal, depending merely on his arm of flesh, and his sword of steel, pursued his diabolical outrages upon the Christians." No sooner was the invading army disbanded, than El Zagal sallied forth from his strong-hold, and carried fire and sword into all those parts that had submitted to the Spanish yoke. The castle of Nixar, being carelessly guarded, was taken by surprise, and its garrison put to the sword. The old warrior raged with sanguinary fury about the whole frontier, attacking convoys, slaying, wounding, and making prisoners, and coming by surprise upon the Christians, wherever they were off their guard.

The alcayde of the fortress of Callar, confiding in the strength of its walls and towers, and on its difficult situation, being built on the summit of a lofty hill, and surrounded by precipices, ventured to absent himself from his post. The vigilant El Zagal was suddenly before it with a powerful force. He stormed the town, sword in hand, fought the Christians from street to street, and drove them, with great slaughter, to the citadel. Here a veteran captain, by the name of Juan

de Avalos, a greyheaded warrior, scarred in many a battle, assumed the command, and made an obstinate defence. Neither the multitude of the enemy, the vehemence of their attacks, though led on by the terrible El Zagal himself, had power to shake the fortitude of this doughty old soldier.

The Moors undermined the outer walls, and one of the towers of the fortress, and made their way into the exterior court. The alcayde manned the tops of his towers; pouring down melted pitch, and showering darts, arrows, stones, and all kinds of missiles, upon the assailants. The Moors were driven out of the court; but, being reinforced with fresh troops, returned repeatedly to the assault. For five days the combat was kept up. The Christians were nearly exhausted; but they were sustained by the cheerings of their stanch old alcayde; and they feared death from the cruel El Zagal, should they surrender. At length, the approach of a powerful force, under Puerto Carrero, relieved them from this fearful peril. El Zagal abandoned the assault: but set fire to the town in his rage and disappointment, and retired to his strong-hold of Guadix.

The example of El Zagal roused his adherents to action. Two bold Moorish alcaydes, Ali Altar and Yza Altar, commanding the fortresses of Alhenden and Salobrenna, laid waste the country of the subjects of Boabdil, and the places which had recently submitted to the Christians. They swept off the cattle, carried off captives, and harassed the whole of the newly conquered frontier.

The Moors, also, of Almeria, and Tavernas, and Purchena, made inroads into Murcia, and carried fire and sword into its most fertile regions; while on the opposite frontier, among the wild valleys and ragged recesses of the Sierra Bermeja, or Red Mountains, many of the Moors, who had lately submitted, again fled to arms. The Marquis of Cadiz suppressed, by timely vigilance, the rebellion of the mountain town of Gausen, situate on a high peak, almost among the clouds; but others of the Moors fortified themselves in rock-built towers and castles, inhabited solely by warriors, whence they carried on a continual war of forage and depredation; sweeping suddenly down into the valleys, and carrying off flocks, and herds, and all kinds of booty, to these eagle nests, to which it was perilous and fruitless to pursue them.

The worthy Fray Antonio Agapida closes his story of this

chequered year in quite a different strain from those triumphant periods, with which he is accustomed to wind up the victorious campaigns of the sovereigns. "Great and mighty," says this venerable chronicler, "were the floods and tempests, which prevailed throughout the kingdom of Castile and Arragon about this time. It seemed as though the windows of heaven were again opened, and a second deluge overwhelming the face of nature. The clouds burst, as it were, in cataracts upon the earth; torrents rushed down from the mountains, overflowing the valleys. Brooks were swelled into raging rivers; houses were undermined; mills were swept away by their own streams; the affrighted shepherds saw their flocks drowned in the midst of the pasture, and were fain to take refuge for their lives in towers and high places. The Guadalquivir, for a time, became a roaring and tumultuous sea; inundating the immense plain of the Tablada, and filling the fair city of Seville with affright.

"A vast black cloud moved over the land, accompanied by a hurricane and a trembling of the earth. Houses were unroofed, the walls and battlements of fortresses shaken, and lofty towers rocked to their foundations. Ships, riding at anchor, were either stranded or swallowed up. Others, under sail, were tossed to and fro upon mountain waves, and cast upon the land; where the whirlwind rent them in pieces, and scattered their fragments in the air. Doleful was the ruin, and great the terror, where this baleful could passed by; and it left a long tract of desolation over sea and land. Some of the faint-hearted," adds Antonio Agapida, "looked upon this tumult of the clements as a prodigious event out of the course of nature. In the weakness of their fears, they connected it with those troubles which occurred in various places; considering it a portent of some great calamity, about to be wrought by the violence of the bloody-handed El Zagal and his fierce adherents."

A CHRONICLE

OF THE

CONQUEST OF GRANADA.

CHAPTER LXIX.

THE SIEGE OF BAZA.

The stormy winter had passed away, and the spring of 1489 was advancing; yet the heavy rains had broken up the roads; the mountain brooks were swollen to raging torrents; and the late shallow and peaceful rivers were deep, turbulent, and dangerous. The Christian troops had been summoned to assemble, in early spring, on the frontiers of Jaen; but were slow in arriving at the appointed place. They were entangled in the miry defiles of the mountains, or fretted impatiently on the banks of impassable floods. It was late in the month of May before they assembled in sufficient force to attempt the proposed invasion; when, at length, a valiant army, of thirteen thousand horse and forty thousand foot, marched merrily over the border. The queen remained at the city of Jaen, with the prince royal and the princesses, her children; accompanied and supported by the venerable Cardinal of Spain, and those reverend prelates who assisted in her councils throughout this holy war. The plan of King Ferdinand was to lay siege to the city of Baza, the key of the remaining possessions of the Moor. That important fortress taken, Guadix and Almeria must soon follow; and then the power of El Zagal would be at an end. As the Catholic king advanced, he had first to secure various castles and strongholds, in the vicinity of Baza, which might otherwise harass his army. Some of these made obstinate resistance; especially the town of Cuxar. The Christians assailed the walls with various machines, to sap them and batter them down. The brave alcayde, Hubec Adalgar, opposed force to force, and engine to engine. He manned his towers with his bravest warriors, who rained down an iron shower upon the enemy; and he linked cauldrons together by strong chains, and cast fire from them, consuming the wooden engines of their as-

sailants, and those who managed them. The siege was protracted for several days. The bravery of the alcayde could not save his fortress from an overwhelming foe, but it gained him honourable terms. Ferdinand permitted the garrison and the inhabitants to repair with their effects to Baza; and the valiant Hubec Adalgar marched forth with the remnant of his force, and took the way to that devoted city.

The delays, which had been caused to the invading army by these various circumstances, had been diligently improved by the old Moorish El Zagal; who felt that he was now making his last stand for empire, and that this campaign would decide, whether he should continue a king, or sink into a vassal.

El Zagal was but a few leagues from Baza, at the city of Guadix. This last was the most important point of his remaining territories, being a kind of bulwark between them and the hostile city of Granada, the seat of his nephew's power. Though he heard of the tide of war, therefore, that was collecting, and rolling towards the city of Baza, he dared not go in person to its assistance. He dreaded that, should he leave Guadix, Boabdil would attack him in rear, while the Christian army was battling with him in front. El Zagal trusted in the great strength of Baza to defy any violent assaults; and he profited by the delays of the Christian army, to supply it with all possible means of defence. He sent thither all the troops he could spare from his garrison of Guadix, and despatched missives throughout his territories, calling upon all true Moslems to hasten to Baza, to make a devoted stand in defence of their homes, their liberties, and their religion. The cities of Tavernas and Purchena, and the surrounding heights and valleys, responded to his orders, and sent forth their fighting men to the field. The rocky fastnesses of the Alpujarras resounded with the din of arms. Troops of horse and bodies of foot soldiers were seen winding down the rugged cliffs and defiles of those marble mountains, and hastening towards Baza. Many brave cavaliers of Granada, also, spurning the quiet and security of Christian vassalage, secretly left the city, and hastened to join their fighting countrymen. The great dependence of El Zagal, however, was upon the valour and loyalty of his cousin and brother-in-law, Cidi Yahye Alnazar Aben Zelim, who was alcayde of Almeria; a cavalier experienced in warfare, and redoubtable

in the field. He wrote to him, to leave Almeria, and repair, with all speed, at the head of his troops, to Baza. Cidi Yahye departed immediately, with ten thousand of the bravest Moors in the kingdom. These were, for the most part, hardy mountaineers, tempered to sun and storm, and tried in many a combat. None equalled them for a sally or a skirmish. They were adroit in executing a thousand stratagems, ambuscades, and evolutions. Impetuous in their assaults, yet governed in their utmost fury by a word or sign from their commander, at the sound of a trumpet, they would check themselves in the midst of their career, and wheel off and disperse; and, at another sound of a trumpet, they would as suddenly reassemble, and return to the attack. They were upon the enemy when least expected, coming like a rushing blast, spreading havoc and consternation, and then passing away in an instant; so that, when one recovered from the shock, and looked around, behold, nothing was seen or heard of this tempest of war, but a cloud of dust, and the clatter of retreating troops!

When Cidi Yahye led his train of ten thousand valiant warriors into the gates of Baza, the city rung with acclamations; and for a time the inhabitants thought themselves secure. El Zagal also felt a glow of confidence, notwithstanding his own absence from the city. "Cidi Yahye," said he, is my cousin and my brother-in-law, related to me by blood and marriage: he is a second self: happy is that monarch who has his kinsman to command his armies!" With all these reinforcements, the garrison of Baza amounted to above twenty thousand men. There were at this time three principal leaders in the city; Mahommed ben Hassan, surnamed the Veteran, who was military governor, or alcayde, an old Moor of great experience and discretion. The second was Hamet Abu Hali, who was captain of the troops stationed in the place; and the third was Hubec Adalgar, the valiant alcayde of Cuxar, who had repaired hither with the remains of his garrison. Over all these Cidi Yahye exercised a supreme command, in consequence of his being of the blood royal, and in the special confidence of Muley Abdalla El Zagal. He was eloquent and ardent in council, and fond of striking and splendid achievements; but he was a little prone to be carried away by the excitement of the moment, and the warmth of his imagination. The councils of war of these commanders, therefore, were more frequently controlled by the opinions of

the old alcayde, Mohammed ben Hassan, for whose shrewdness, caution, and experience, Cidi Yahye himself felt the greatest deference.

The city of Baza was situate in a spacious valley, eight leagues in length and three in breadth, called the Hoya or basin of Baza. It was surrounded by a range of mountains, called the Sierra Xabalcohol; the streams of which, collecting themselves into two rivers, watered and fertilized the country. The city was built in the plain; but one part of it was protected by the rocky precipices of the mountain, and by a powerful citadel; the other part was defended by massive walls, studded with immense towers.* It had suburbs towards the plain, imperfectly fortified by earthen walls. In front of these suburbs extended a tract of orchards and gardens, nearly a league in length, so thickly planted as to resemble a continued forest. Here every citizen, who could afford it, had his little plantation, and his garden of fruit, and flowers, and vegetables; watered by canals and rivulets, and dominated by a small tower, to serve for recreation or defence. This wilderness of groves and gardens, intersected in all parts by canals and runs of water, and studded by above a thousand small towers, formed a kind of protection to this side of the city; rendering all approach extremely difficult and perplexed, and affording covert to the defenders.

While the Christian army had been detained before the frontier posts, the city of Baza had been a scene of hurried and unremitting preparation. All the grain of the surrounding valley, though yet unripe, was hastily reaped, and borne into the city, to prevent it from yielding sustenance to the enemy. The country was drained of all its supplies. Flocks and herds were driven, bleating and bellowing, into the gates. Long trains of beasts of burden, some laden with food, others with lances, darts, and arms of all kinds, kept pouring into the place. Already there were munitions collected sufficient for a siege of fifteen months; yet still the eager and hasty preparations were going on, when the army of Ferdinand came in sight. On one side might be seen scattered parties of foot and horse, spurring to the gates; and muleteers, hurrying forward their burdened animals; all anxious to get under shelter before the gathering storm. On the other side, the cloud of war came sweeping down the valley; the roll of drum, or clang of trumpet, resounding

occasionally from its deep bosom, or the bright glance of of arms flashing forth like vivid lightning from its columns. King Ferdinand pitched his tents in the valley, beyond the green labyrinth of gardens. He sent his heralds to summon the city to surrender, promising the most favourable terms, in case of immediate compliance; and, avowing, in the most solemn terms, his resolution, never to abandon the siege, until he had possession of the place.

Upon receiving this summons, the Moorish commanders held a council of war. The prince Cidi Yahye, indignant at the menace of the king, was for retorting by a declaration, that the garrison never would surrender, but would fight until buried under the ruins of the walls. "Of what avail," said the veteran Mohammed, "is a declaration of the kind, which we may falsify by our deeds? Let us threaten what we know we can perform; and let us endeavour to perform more than we threaten." In conformity to the advice of Mohammed ben Hassan, therefore, a laconic reply was sent to the Christian monarch, thanking him for his offer of favourable terms, but informing him, that they were placed in the city to defend, not to surrender it.

CHAPTER LXX.

When the reply of the Moorish commanders was brought to King Ferdinand, he prepared to press the siege with the utmost rigour. Finding the camp too far from the city, and that the intervening orchards afforded shelter for the sallies of the Moors, he determined to advance it beyond the gardens, in the space between them and the suburbs, where his batteries would have full play upon the city walls. A detachment was sent in advance, to take possession of the gardens, and to keep a check upon the suburbs, opposing any sally, while the encampment should be formed and fortified. The various commanders entered the orchards at different points. The young cavaliers marched fearlessly forward, but the experienced veterans foresaw infinite peril in the mazes of this verdant labyrinth. The master of Santiago, as he led his troops into the centre of the gardens, exhorted them to keep by one another, and to press forward, in defiance of all difficulty or danger; assuring them, that God would give them the victory, if they attacked hardily and persisted resolutely.

Scarcely had they entered the verge of the orchards, when a din of drums and trumpets, mingled with war cries, were heard from the suburbs, and a legion of Moorish warriors on foot poured forth. They were led on by the Prince Cidi Yahye. He saw the imminent danger of the city, should the Christians gain possession of the orchards. "Soldiers," he cried, "we fight for life and liberty, for our families, our country, our religion*: nothing is left for us to depend upon but the strength of our hands, the courage of our hearts, and the almighty protection of Allah!" The Moors answered him with shouts of war, and rushed to the encounter. The two hosts met in the middle of the gardens. A chance medley combat ensued, with lances, arquebuses, cross-bows, and cimeters. The perplexed nature of the ground, cut up and intersected by canals and streams, the closeness of the trees, the multiplicity of towers and petty edifices, gave greater advantages to the Moors, who were on foot, than to the Christians, who were on horseback. The Moors, too, knew the ground, all its alleys and passes, and were thus enabled to lurk, to sally forth, to attack and retreat, almost without injury.

The Christian commanders, seeing this, ordered many of the horsemen to dismount, and fight on foot. The battle then became fierce and deadly, each disregarding his own life, provided he could slay his enemy. It was not so much a general battle, as a multitude of petty actions; for every orchard and garden had its distinct contest. No one could see farther than the little scene of fury and bloodshed around him, or knew how the general battle fared. In vain the captains exerted their voices; in vain the trumpets brayed forth signals and commands: all was confounded and unheard in the universal din and uproar; no one kept to his standard, but fought as his own fury or fear dictated.

In some places the Christians had the advantage, in others the Moors. Often a victorious party, pursuing the vanquished, came upon a superior and triumphant force of the enemy, and the fugitives turned back upon them in an overwhelming wave. Some broken remnants, in their terror and confusion, fled from their own countrymen, and sought refuge among their enemies, not knowing friend from foe in the

* "Illi [Mauri] pro fortunis, pro libertate, pro laribus patriciis, pro vitâ denique certabant."—Petri Martyr. Epist. 70.

obscurity of the groves. The Moors were more adroit in these wild skirmishes, from their flexibility, lightness, and agility, and the rapidity with which they would disperse, rally, and return again to the charge.*

The hardest fighting was about the small garden towers and pavilions, which served as so many petty fortresses. Each party by turns gained them, defended them fiercely, and were driven out. Many of the towers were set on fire, and increased the horrors of the fight, by the wreaths of smoke and flame in which they wrapped the groves, and by the shrieks of those who were burning.

Several of the Christian cavaliers, bewildered by the uproar and confusion, and shocked at the carnage which prevailed, would have led their men out of the action; but they were entangled in a labyrinth, and knew not which way to retreat. While in this perplexity, the standard-bearer of one of the squadrons of the grand cardinal had his arm carried off by a cannon ball: the standard was well nigh falling into the hands of the enemy, when Rodrigo de Mendoza, an intrepid youth, natural son of the grand cardinal, rushed to its rescue, through a shower of balls, lances, and arrows; and, bearing it aloft, dashed forward with it into the hottest of the combat, followed by his shouting soldiers. King Ferdinand, who remained in the skirts of the orchard, was in extreme anxiety. It was impossible to see much of the action, for the multiplicity of trees, and towers, and wreaths of smoke; and those who were driven out defeated, or came out wounded and exhausted, gave different accounts, according to the fate of the partial conflicts in which they had been engaged. Ferdinand exerted himself to the utmost, to animate and encourage his troops to this blind encounter, sending reinforcements of horse and foot to those points where the battle was more sanguinary and doubtful. Among those that were brought forth mortally wounded was Don Juan de Lara, a youth of uncommon merit, greatly prized by the king, beloved by the army, and recently married to Donna Catalina de Urrea, a young lady of distinguished beauty.† They laid him at the foot of a tree, and endeavoured to staunch and bind up his wounds with a scarf which his bride had wrought for him: but his life blood flowed too profusely; and while a holy friar

* Mariana, lib. xxv. cap. 13.
† Mariana. P. Martyr. Zurita.

was yet administering to him the last sacred offices of the church, he expired, almost at the feet of his sovereign.

On the other hand, the veteran alcayde, Mohammed ben Hassan, surrounded by a little band of chieftains, kept an anxious eye upon the scene of combat, from the walls of the city. For nearly twelve hours the battle had raged without intermission. The thickness of the foliage hid all the particulars from their sight; but they could see the flash of swords, and glance of helmets, among the trees. Columns of smoke rose in every direction, while the clash of arms, the thundering of ribadoquines and arquebuses, the shouts and cries of the combatants, and the groans and supplications of the wounded, bespoke the deadly conflict, that was waging in the bosom of the groves. They were harassed too by the shrieks and lamentations of the Moorish women and children, as their wounded relatives were brought bleeding from the scene of action, and were stunned by a general outcry of woe, on the part of the combatants, as the body of Redoun Zalfarga, a renegade Christian, and one of the bravest of their generals, was borne breathless into the city.

At length the din of battle aproached nearer to the skirts of the orchards. They beheld their warriors driven out from among the groves by fresh squadrons of the enemy; and, after disputing the ground inch by inch, obliged to retire to a place between the orchards and the suburbs, which was fortified with palisadoes.

The Christians immediately planted opposing palisadoes, and established strong outposts near to the retreat of the Moors; while, at the same time, King Ferdinand ordered that this encampment should be pitched within the hard won orchards.

Mohammed ben Hassan sallied forth to the aid of the Prince Cidi Yahye, and made a desperate attempt to dislodge the enemy from this formidable position; but the night had closed, and the darkness rendered it impossible to make any impression. The Moors, however, kept up constant assaults and alarms throughout the night, and the weary Christians, exhausted by the toils and sufferings of the day, were not allowed a moment of repose.*

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 106. 107. Cura de los Palacios, cap. 92. Zurita, lib. xx. cap. 81.

CHAPTER LXXI.

The morning sun rose upon a piteous scene before the walls of Baza. The Christian outposts, harrassed throughout the night, were pale and haggard; while the multitude of slain which lay before their palisadoes showed the fierce attacks they had sustained, and the bravery of their defence.

Beyond them lay the groves and gardens of Baza, once the favourite resorts for recreation and delight, now a scene of horror and desolation. The towers and pavilions were smoking ruins; the canals and watercourses were discoloured with blood, and choked with the bodies of the slain. Here and there the ground, deep dinted with the tramp of man and steed, and plashed and slippery with gore, showed where there had been some fierce and mortal conflict; while the bodies of Moors and Christians, ghastly in death, lay half concealed among the matted and trampled shrubs, and flowers, and herbage.

Amidst the sanguinary scenes arose the Christian tents, which had been hastily pitched among the gardens in the preceding evening. The experience of the night, however, and the forlorn aspect of everything in the morning, convinced King Ferdinand of the perils and hardships to which his camp must be exposed in its present situation; and, after a consultation with his principal cavaliers, he resolved to abandon the orchards.

It was a dangerous movement to extricate his army from so entangled a situation in the face of so alert and daring an enemy. A bold front was, therefore, kept up towards the city. Additional troops were ordered to the advanced posts, and works begun, as if for a settled encampment. Not a tent was struck in the gardens, but in the meantime the most active and unremitting exertions were made to remove back all the baggage and furniture of the camp to the original station.

All day the Moors beheld a formidable show of war maintained in front of the gardens, while in the rear, the tops of the Christian tents, and the pennons of the different commanders, were seen rising above the groves. Suddenly, towards evening, the tents sunk and disappeared; the outposts broke up their stations and withdrew; and the whole

shadow of an encampment was fast vanishing from their eyes.

The Moor saw, too late, the subtle manœuvre of King Ferdinand. Cidi Yahye again sallied forth, with a large force of horse and foot, and pressed furiously upon the Christians. The latter, however, experienced in Moorish attack, retired in close order; sometimes turning upon the enemy, and driving them to their barricadoes, and then pursuing their retreat. In this way the army was extricated, without much further loss, from the perilous labyrinth of the gardens. The camp was now out of danger, but it was, also, too distant from the city to do mischief, while the Moors could sally forth and return without hinderance. The king called a council of war, to consider in what manner to proceed. The Marquis of Cadiz was for abandoning the siege for the present; the place being too strong, too well garrisoned and provided, and too extensive, to be either carried by assault, and reduced by famine, or invested by their limited forces; while, in lingering before it, the army would be exposed to the usual maladies and sufferings of besieging enemies; and, when the rainy season came on, would be shut up by the swelling of the two rivers. He recommended, instead, that the king should throw garrisons of horse and foot into all the towns captured in the neighbourhood, and leave them to keep up a predatory war upon Baza, while he should overrun and ravage all the country; so that, in the following year, Almeria and Guadix, having all their subject towns and territories taken from them, might be starved into submission.

Don Gutiere de Carnedas, senior commander of Lara, on the other hand, maintained that to abandon the siege would be construed by the enemy into a sign of weakness and irresolution. It would give new spirits to the partisans of El Zagal, and would gain to his standard many of the wavering subjects of Boabdil, if it did not encourage the fickle populace of Granada to open rebellion. He advised, therefore, that the siege should be prosecuted with vigour.

The pride of Ferdinand pleaded in favour of the last opinion, for it would be doubly humiliating again to return from a campaign in this part of the Moorish kingdom without striking a blow. But when he reflected on all that his army had suffered, and on all that they must still suffer should the siege continue, especially from the difficulty of obtaining a

regular supply of provisions for so numerous a host across a great extent of rugged and mountainous country, he determined to consult the safety of his people, and to adopt the advice of the Marquis of Cadiz.

When the soldiery heard that the king was about to raise the siege, in mere consideration for their sufferings, they were filled with generous enthusiasm, and entreated, as with one voice, that the siege might never be abandoned until the city surrendered.

Perplexed by conflicting councils, the king despatched messengers to the queen at Jaen, requesting her advice. Posts had been stationed between them in such manner that missives from the camp could reach the queen within ten hours. Isabella sent instantly her reply. She left the policy of raising or continuing the siege to the decision of the king and his captains; but, should they determine to persevere, she pledged herself, with the aid of God, to forward them men, money, provisions, and all other supplies, until the city should be taken.

The reply of the queen determined Ferdinand to persevere; and when his determination was made known to the army, it was hailed with as much joy as if it had been tidings of a victory.

CHAPTER LXXII.

The Moorish prince, Cidi Yahye, had received intelligence of the doubts and discussions in the Christian camp, and flattered himself with hopes that the besieging army would soon retire in despair, though the veteran alcayde, Mohammed, shook his head with incredulity at the suggestion. A sudden movement next morning in the Christian camp seemed to confirm the sanguine hopes of the prince. The tents were struck, the artillery and baggage were conveyed away, and bodies of soldiers began to march along the valley. The momentary gleam of triumph was soon dispelled. The Catholic king had merely divided his host into two camps, the more effectually to distress the city. One, consisting of foor thousand horse and eight thousand foot, with all the artillery and battering engines, took post on the side of the city towards the mountain. This was commanded by the valiant Marquis of Cadiz, with whom

were Don Alonzo de Aguilar, Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero, and many other distinguished cavaliers.

The other camp was commanded by the king, having six thousand horse, and a great host of foot soldiers, the hardy mountaineers of Biscay, Guipuscoa, Gallicia, and the Asturias. Among the cavaliers who were with the king were the brave Count de Tendilla, Don Rodrigo de Mendoza, and Don Alonzo de Cardenas, master of Santiago. The two camps were wide asunder, on opposite sides of the city, and between them lay the thick wilderness of orchards. Both camps were, therefore, fortified by great trenches, breast-works, and palisadoes. The veteran Mohammed, as he saw these two formidable camps glittering on each side of the city, and noted the well-known pennons of renowned commanders fluttering above them, still comforted his companions. "These camps," said he, "are too far removed from each other for mutual succour and co-operation; and the forest of orchards is as a gulf between them." This consolation was but of short continuance. Scarcely were the Christian camps fortified, when the ears of the Moorish garrison were startled by the sound of innumerable axes, and the crash of falling trees. They looked with anxiety from their highest towers, and behold, their favourite groves were sinking beneath the blows of the Christian pioneers! The Moors sallied forth with fiery zeal to protect their beloved gardens and the orchards in which they so much delighted. The Christians, however, were too well supported to be driven from their work. Day after day the gardens became the scene of incessant and bloody skirmishings. Still the devastation of the groves went on, for King Ferdinand was too well aware of the necessity of clearing away this screen of woods not to bend all his forces to the undertaking. It was a work, however, of gigantic toil and patience. The trees were of such magnitude, and so closely set together, and spread over so wide an extent, that, notwithstanding four thousand men were employed, they could scarcely clear a strip of land ten paces broad within a day; and such were the interruptions from the incessant assaults of the Moors, that it was full forty days before the orchards were completely levelled.

The devoted city of Baza now lay stripped of its beautiful covering of groves and gardens, at once its ornament, its delight, and its protection. The besiegers went on slowly

and surely, with almost incredible labours, to invest and isolate the city. They connected their camps by a deep trench across the plain, a league in length, into which they diverted the waters of the mountain streams. They protected this trench by palisadoes, fortified by fifteen castles, at regular distances. They dug a deep trench also, two leagues in length, across the mountain, in the rear of the city, reaching from camp to camp, and fortified it on each side with walls of earth and stone, and wood. Thus the Moors were enclosed on all sides by trenches, palisadoes, walls, and castles; so that it was impossible for them to sally beyond this great line of circumvallation, nor could any force enter to their succour. Ferdinand made an attempt likewise to cut off the supply of water from the city; "for water," observes the worthy Agapida, "is more necessary to these infidels than bread; as they make use of it in repeated daily ablutions, enjoined by their damnable religion, and employ it in baths, and in a thousand other idle and extravagant modes, of which we Spaniards and Christians make but little account."

There was a noble fountain of pure water, which gushed out at the foot of the hill Albohacin, just behind the city. The Moors had almost a superstitious fondness for this fountain, and daily depended upon it for their supplies. Receiving intimation from some deserters of the plan of King Ferdinand to get possession of this precious fountain, they sallied forth at night, and threw up such powerful works upon the impending hill, as to set all attempts of the Christian assailants at defiance.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

The siege of Baza, while it displayed the skill and science of the Christian commanders, gave but little scope for the adventurous spirit and fiery valour of the young Spanish cavaliers. They repined at the tedious monotony and dull security of their fortified camp; and longed for some soul-stirring exploit of difficulty and danger. Two of the most spirited of these youthful cavaliers were Francisco de Bazan and Antonio de Cueva, the latter of whom was son to the Duke of Albuquerque. As they were one day seated on the ramparts of the camp, and venting their impatience at this life of inaction, they were overheard by a veteran adalid, one

of those scouts, or guides, who are acquainted with all parts of the country. "Señores," said he, "if you wish for a service of peril and profit; if you are willing to pluck the fiery old Moor by the beard; I can lead you to where you may put your mettle to the proof. Hard by the city of Guadix are certain hamlets, rich in booty: I can conduct you by a way in which you may come upon them by surprise; and, if you are as cool in the head as you are hot in the spur, you may bear off your spoils from under the very eyes of old El Zagal." The idea of thus making booty at the very gates of Guadix pleased the hot spirited youths. These predatory excursions were frequent about this time; and the Moors of Padul, Alhenden, and other towns of the Alpuxarras, had recently harassed the Christian territories by expeditions of the kind. Francisco de Bazan and Antonio de Cueva soon found other young cavaliers of their age ready to join them in the adventure; and, in a little while, they had nearly three hundred horse and two hundred foot, ready equipped, and eager for the foray.

Keeping their destination secret, they sallied out of the camp, on the edge of an evening, and, guided by their adalid, made their way by starlight through the most secret roads of the mountains. In this way they pressed on rapidly day and night, until, early one morning before cock crowing, they fell suddenly upon the hamlets, made prisoners of the inhabitants, sacked the houses, ravaged the fields, and, sweeping through the meadows, gathered together all the flocks and herds. Without giving themselves time to rest, they set out upon their return, making with all speed for the mountains, before the alarm should be given, and the country roused.

Several of the herdsmen, however, had fled to Guadix, and carried tidings of the ravage to El Zagal. The beard of old Muley trembled with rage. He immediately sent out six hundred of his choicest horse and foot, with orders to recover the booty, and to bring those insolent marauders captive to Gaudix.

The Christian cavaliers were urging their cavalgada of cattle and sheep up a mountain as fast as their own weariness would permit; when, looking back, they beheld a great cloud of dust, and presently descried the turbaned host hot upon their traces.

They saw that the Moors were superior in number; they

were fresh also, both man and steed: whereas both they and their horses were fatigued by two days and two nights of hard marching. Several of the horsemen, therefore, gathered round the commanders, and proposed that they should relinquish their spoil, and save themselves by flight. The captains, Francisco de Bazan and Antonio de Cueva, spurned at such craven counsel. "What!" cried they, "abandon our prey without striking a blow! Leave our foot soldiers, too, in the lurch, to be overwhelmed by the enemy? If any one gives such counsel through fear, he mistakes the course of safety; for there is less danger in presenting a bold front to the foe, than in turning a dastard back; and fewer men are killed in a brave advance than in a cowardly retreat."

Some of the cavaliers were touched by these words, and declared that they would stand by the foot soldiers, like true companions in arms. The great mass of the party, however, were volunteers, brought together by chance, who received no pay, nor had any common tie, to keep them together in time of danger. The pleasure of the expedition being over, each thought but of his own safety, regardless of his companions. As the enemy approached, the tumult of opinions increased; and everything was confusion. The captains, to put an end to the dispute, ordered the standard-bearer to advance against the Moors; well knowing that no true cavalier would hesitate to follow and defend his banner. The standard-bearer hesitated; the troops were on the point of taking to flight. Upon this, a cavalier of the royal guards, named Hernando Perez del Pulgar, alcayde of the fortress of Salar, rode to the front. He took off a handkerchief which he wore round his head, after the Andalusian fashion, and tying it to the end of his lance, elevated it in the air. "Cavaliers," cried he, "why do you take weapons in your hands, if you depend upon your feet for safety? This day will determine who is the brave man and who the coward. He who is disposed to fight shall not want a standard; let him follow this handkerchief!" So saying, he waved his banner, and spurred bravely against the Moors. His example shamed some, and filled others with generous emulation. All turned with one accord, and, following the valiant Pulgar, rushed with shouts upon the enemy.

The Moors scarcely waited to receive the shock of their encounter. Seized with a sudden panic, they took to flight,

and were pursued for a great distance, with great slaughter. Three hundred of their dead strewed the road, and were stripped and despoiled by the conquerors; many were taken prisoners; and the Christian cavaliers returned in triumph to the camp, with a long cavalcade of sheep and cattle, and mules laden with booty, and bearing before them the singular standard which had conducted them to victory.

When King Ferdinand was informed of the gallant action of Hernando Perez del Pulgar, he immediately conferred on him the honour of knighthood; and ordered that, in memory of his achievements, he should bear for arms a lance with a handkerchief, together with a castle, and twelve lions. This is but one of many hardy and heroic deeds done by that brave cavalier, in the wars against the Moors; by which he gained great renown, and the distinguished appellation of "El de las hazañas," or, "he of the exploits."*

CHAPTER LXXIV.

THE old Moorish king, El Zagal, mounted a tower, and looked out eagerly, to enjoy the sight of the Christian marauders brought captive into the gates of Baza; but his spirits fell when he beheld his own troops stealing back in the dusk of the evening, in broken dejected parties.

The fortune of war bore hard against the old monarch. His mind was harassed by the disastrous tidings brought each day from Baza, of the sufferings of the inhabitants, and the numbers of the garrison slain in the frequent skirmishes. He dared not go in person to the relief of the place, for his presence was necessary in Guadix, to keep a check upon his nephew in Granada. He made efforts to send reinforcements and supplies; but they were intercepted, and either captured or driven back. Still his situation was, in some respects, preferable to that of his nephew Boabdil. The old monarch was battling like a warrior on the last step of his throne. El Chiquito remained, a kind of pensioned vassal, in the luxurious abode of the Alhambra. The chivalrous part of the inhabitants of Granada could not but compare the generous

* Hernando del Pulgar, the historian, secretary to the Queen Isabella, is confounded with this cavalier by some writers. He was also present at the siege of Baza, and recounted this transaction in his Chronicle of the Catholic Sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella.

stand made by the warriors of Baza for their country and their faith, with their own time-serving submission to the yoke of an unbeliever. Every account they received ot the wars of Baza wrung their hearts with agony; every account of the exploits of its devoted defenders brought blushes to their cheeks. Many stole forth secretly with their weapons, and hastened to join the besieged; and the partisans of El Zagal wrought upon the patriotism and passions of the remainder, until another of those conspiracies was formed, that were continually menacing the unsteady throne of Granada. It was concerted by the conspirators to assail the Alhambra on a sudden, to slay Boabdil, to assemble all the troops, and march to Guadix; where, being reinforced by the garrison of that place, and led on by the old warrior monarch, they might fall, with overwhelming power, upon the Christian army before Baza.

Fortunately for Boabdil, he discovered the conspiracy in time, and had the heads of the leaders struck off, and placed upon the walls of the Alhambra: an act of severity, unusual with this mild and wavering monarch, which struck terror into the disaffected, and produced a kind of mute tranquillity throughout the city.

King Ferdinand had full information of all these movements and measures for the relief of Baza, and took timely precautions to prevent them. Bodies of horsemen held watch in the mountain passes, to prevent all supplies, and to intercept any generous volunteers from Granada; and watch-towers were erected, or scouts placed, on any commanding height, to give the alarm, at the least sign of a hostile turban.

The Prince Cidi Yahye and his brave companions in arms were thus gradually walled up, as it were, from the rest of the world. A line of towers, the battlements of which bristled with troops, girdled their city; and behind the intervening bulwarks and palisadoes passed and repassed continual bodies of troops. Week after week, and month after month, glided away; but Ferdinand waited in vain for the garrison to be either terrified or starved into surrender. Every day they sallied forth with the spirit and alacrity of troops high fed, and flushed with confidence. "The Christian monarch," said the veteran Mohammed ben Hassan, "builds his hopes upon our growing faint and desponding: we must manifest unusual

cheerfulness and vigour. What would be rashness in other service, becomes prudence with us." The Prince Cidi Yahye agreed with him in opinion; and sallied forth, with his troops, upon all kinds of hare-brained exploits. They laid ambushes, concerted surprises, and made the most desperate assaults. The great extent of the Christian works rendered them weak in many parts. Against these the Moors directed their attacks; suddenly breaking into them, making a hasty ravage, and bearing off their booty, in triumph, to the city. Sometimes they would sally forth, by the passes and clefts of the mountain in the rear of the city, which it was difficult to guard; and, hurrying down into the plain, would sweep off all cattle and sheep that were grazing near the suburbs, and all stragglers from the camp.

These partisan sallies brought on many sharp and bloody encounters; in some of which, Don Alonzo de Aguilar and the alcayde de los Donzeles distinguished themselves greatly. During one of these hot skirmishes, which happened on the skirts of the mountain, about twilight, a valiant cavalier, named Martin Galindo, beheld a powerful Moor, dealing deadly blows about him, and making great havoc among the Christians. Galindo pressed forward, and challenged him to single combat. The Moor, who was of the valiant tribe of the Abencerrages, was not slow in answering the call. Couching their lances, they rushed furiously upon each other. At the first shock, the Moor was wounded in the face, and borne out of his saddle. Before Galindo could check his steed, and turn from his career, the Moor sprang upon his feet, recovered his lance, and, rushing upon him, wounded him in the head and the arm. Though Galindo was on horseback, and the Moor on foot, yet such was the prowess and address of the latter, that the Christian knight, being disabled in the arm, was in the utmost peril, when his comrades hastened to his assistance. At their approach, the valiant pagan retreated slowly up the rocks, keeping them at bay, until he found himself among his companions.

Several of the young Spanish cavaliers, stung by the triumph of this Moslem knight, would have challenged others of the Moors to single combat; but King Ferdinand prohibited all vaunting encounters of the kind. He forbade his troops, also, to provoke skirmishes; well knowing that the Moors were more dexterous than most people in this irre-

gular mode of fighting, and were better acquainted with the ground.

CHAPTER LXXV.

"WHILE the holy Christian army," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "was thus beleaguering this infidel city of Baza, there rode into the camp, one day, two reverend friars of the order of Saint Francis. One was of portly person, and authoritative air. He bestrode a goodly steed, well conditioned, and well caparisoned; while his companion rode behind him, upon a humble hack, poorly accoutred; and, as he rode, he scarcely raised his eyes from the ground, but maintained a meek and lowly air.

The arrival of two friars in the camp was not a matter of much note; for, in these holy wars, the church militant continually mingled in the affray, and helmet and cowl were always seen together; but it was soon discovered, that these worthy saints errant were from a far country, and on a mission of great import. They were, in truth, just arrived from the Holy Land; being two of the saintly men, who kept vigil over the sepulchre of our blessed Lord at Jerusalem. He, of the tall and portly form, and commanding presence, was Fray Antonio Millan, prior of the Franciscan convent in the Holy City. He had a full and florid countenance, a sonorous voice, and was round, and swelling, and copious, in his periods, like one accustomed to harangue, and to be listened to with deference. His companion was small and spare in form, pale of visage, and soft, and silken, and almost whispering in speech. "He had a humble and lowly way," says Agapida; "evermore bowing the head, as became one of his calling. Yet he was one of the most active, zealous, and effective brothers of the convent; and, when he raised his small black eye from the earth, there was a keen glance out of the corner, which showed, that, though harmless as a dove, he was, nevertheless, as wise as a serpent."

These holy men had come, on a momentous embassy, from the Grand Soldan of Egypt; or, as Agapida terms him, in the language of the day, the Soldan of Babylon. The league, which had been made between that potentate and his arch foe, the Grand Turk, Bajazet II., to unite in arms for the salvation of Granada, as has been mentioned in a previous

chapter of this chronicle, had come to nought. The infidel princes had again taken up arms against each other, and had relapsed into their ancient hostility. Still the Grand Soldan, as head of the whole Moslem sect, considered himself bound to preserve the kingdom of Granada from the grasp of unbelievers. He despatched, therefore, these two holy friars, with letters to the Castilian sovereigns, as well as to the pope, and to the King of Naples, remonstrating against the evils done to the Moors of the kingdom of Granada, who were of his faith and kindred: whereas, it was well known, that great numbers of Christians were indulged and protected in the full enjoyment of their property, their liberty, and their faith, in his dominions. He insisted, therefore, that this war should cease; that the Moors of Granada should be reinstated in the territory of which they had been dispossessed: otherwise, he threatened to put to death all the Christians beneath his sway, to demolish their convents and temples, and to destroy the Holy Sepulchre.

This fearful menace had spread consternation among the Christians of Palestine; and when the intrepid Fray Antonio Millan and his lowly companion departed on their mission, they were accompanied far from the gates of Jerusalem by an anxious throng of brethren and disciples, who remained watching them with tearful eyes, as they journeyed over the plains of Judea.

These holy ambassadors were received with great distinction by King Ferdinand; for men of their cloth had ever high honour and consideration in his court. He had long and frequent conversations with them, about the Holy Land; the state of the Christian church in the dominions of the Grand Soldan, and of the policy and conduct of that arch infidel towards it. The portly prior of the Franciscan convent was full, and round, and oratorical in his replies, and the king expressed himself much pleased with the eloquence of his periods: but the politic monarch was observed to lend a close and attentive ear to the whispering voice of the lowly companion; "whose discourse," adds Agapida, "though modest and low, was clear and fluent, and full of subtle wisdom."

These holy friars had visited Rome in their journeying, where they had delivered the letter of the Soldan to the sovereign pontiff. His holiness had written by them to the

Castilian sovereigns, requesting to know what reply they had to offer to this demand of the oriental potentate.

The King of Naples also wrote to them on the subject, but in wary terms. He inquired into the course of this war with the Moors of Granada, and expressed great marvel at its events; "as if," says Agapida, "both were not notorious throughout all the Christian world. Nay," adds the worthy friar, with becoming indignation, "he uttered opinions savouring of little better than damnable heresy; for he observed that although the Moors were of a different sect, they ought not to be maltreated without just cause; and hinted, that, if the Castilian sovereigns did not suffer any crying injury from the Moors, it would be improper to do anything which might draw great damage upon the Christians: as if, when once the sword of the faith was drawn, it ought ever to be sheathed, until this scum of heathendom were utterly destroyed, or driven from the land. But this monarch," he continues, "was more kindly disposed towards the infidels, than was honest and lawful in a Christian prince, and was at that very time in league with the Soldan, against their common enemy, the Grand Turk."

These pious sentiments of the truly Catholic Agapida are echoed by Padre Mariana, in his history;* but the worthy chronicler, Pedro Abarca, attributes the interference of the King of Naples, not to lack of orthodoxy in religion, but to an excess of worldly policy; he being apprehensive, that, should Ferdinand conquer the Moors of Granada, he might have time and means to assert a claim of the house of Arragon to the crown of Naples.

"King Ferdinand," continues the worthy father Pedro Abarca, "was no less master of dissimulation than his cousin of Naples; so he replied to him with the utmost suavity of manner; going into a minute and patient vindication of the war, and taking great apparent pains to inform him of those things, which all the world knew, but of which the other pretended to be ignorant."† At the same time, he soothed his solicitude about the fate of the Christians in the empire of the Grand Soldan; assuring him, that the great revenue extorted from them in rents and tributes, would be a certain protection against the threatened violence.

* Mariana, lib. xxv. cap. 15.
† Abarca, Anales de Aragon, rey. xxx. cap. 3.

To the pope, he made the usual vindication of the war; that it was for the recovery of ancient territory usurped by the Moors, for the punishment of wars and violences inflicted upon the Christians; and, finally, that it was a holy crusade, for the glory and advancement of the church.

"It was a truly edifying sight," says Agapida, "to behold these friars, after they had had their audience of the king, moving about the camp, always surrounded by nobles and cavaliers of high and martial renown; these were insatiable in their questions about the Holy Land, the state of the sepulchre of our Lord, and the sufferings of the devoted brethren who guarded it, and the pious pilgrims who resorted there to pay their vows. The portly prior of the convent would stand, with lofty and shining countenance, in the midst of these iron warriors, and declaim with resounding eloquence on the history of the sepulchre; but the humble brother would ever and anon sigh deeply, and, in low tones, utter some tale of sufferings and outrage, at which his steel clad hearers would grasp the hilts of their swords, and mutter between their clenched teeth prayers for another crusade."

The pious friars, having finished their mission to the king, and been treated with all due distinction, took their leave, and wended their way to Jaen, to visit the most Catholic of queens. Isabella, whose heart was the seat of piety, received them as sacred men, invested with more than human dignity. During their residence at Jaen, they were continually in the royal presence; the respectable prior of the convent moved and melted the ladies of the court by his florid rhetoric; but his lowly companion was observed to have continual access to the royal ear. "That saintly and soft spoken messenger," says Agapida, "received the reward of his humility; for the queen, moved by his frequent representations, made in all modesty and lowliness of spirit, granted a yearly sum in perpetuity of one thousand ducats in gold for the support of the monks of the convents of the Holy Sepulchre." *

Moreover, on the departure of these holy ambassadors, the

* La Reyna dió á los frailes mil ducados de renta corda año, para el sustento de los religiosos del Santo Sepulcro, que es la mejor limósna y sustento que hasta nuestros dias haquedado á estos religiosos de Jerusalem: para donde les dió la reyna un velo labrado por sus manos, para poner encima de la santa sepultura del Señor. Garibay, Comp. Hist., lib. xviii. cap. 36.

excellent and most Catholic queen delivered to them a veil devoutly embroidered with her own royal hands, to be placed over the Holy Sepulchre. A precious and inestimable present, which called forth a most eloquent tribute of thanks from the portly prior, but which brought tears into the eyes of his lowly companion.*

CHAPTER LXXVI.

IT has been the custom to laud the conduct and address of King Ferdinand in this most arduous and protracted war; but the sage Agapida is more disposed to give credit to the councils and measures of the queen, who, he observes, though less ostensible in action, was in truth the very soul, the vital principle, of this great enterprise. While King Ferdinand was bustling in his camp, and making a glittering display with his gallant chivalry; she, surrounded by her saintly counsellors, in the episcopal palace of Jaen, was devising ways and means to keep the king and his army in existence. She had pledged herself to provide a supply of men, and money, and provisions, until the city should be taken; the hardships of the siege caused a fearful waste of life; but the supply of men was the least difficult part of her undertaking. So beloved was the queen by the chivalry of Spain, that on her calling on them for assistance, not a grandee or cavalier, that yet lingered at home, but either repaired in person or sent forces to the camp; the ancient and warlike families vied with each other, in marshalling forth their vassals; and thus the besieged Moors beheld each day fresh troops arriving before their city, and new ensigns and pennons displayed, emblazoned with arms well known to the veteran warriors.

* It is proper to mention the result of this mission of the two friars, and which the worthy Agapida has neglected to record. At a subsequent period, the Catholic sovereigns sent the distinguished historian, Pietro Martyr of Angleria, as ambassador to the Grand Soldan. That able man made such representations as were perfectly satisfactory to the Oriental potentate. He also obtained from him the remission of many exactions and extortions heretofore practised upon Christian pilgrims visiting the Holy Sepulchre, which, it is presumed, had been gently but cogently detailed to the monarch by the lowly friar. Pietro Martyr wrote an account of his embassy to the Grand Soldan; a work greatly esteemed by the learned, and containing much curious information. It is entitled "De Legatione Babilonica."

But the most arduous task was to keep up a regular supply of provisions. It was not the army alone that had to be supported, but also the captured towns and their garrisons; for the whole country around them had been ravaged, and the conquerors were in danger of starving in the midst of the land they had desolated. To transport what was daily required for such immense numbers was a gigantic undertaking, in a country where there was neither water conveyance, nor roads for carriages. Everything had to be borne by beasts of burden, over rugged and broken paths of the mountains, and through dangerous defiles, exposed to the attacks and plunderings of the Moors.

The wary and calculating merchants, accustomed to supply the army, shrunk from engaging, at their own risk, in so hazardous an undertaking. The queen, therefore, hired fourteen thousand beasts of burden, and ordered all the wheat and barley to be bought up in Andalusia, and in the domains of the knights of Santiago and Calatrava. She distributed the administration of these supplies among able and confidential persons. Some were employed to collect the grain, others to take it to the mills, others to superintend the grinding and delivery, and others to convey it to the camp. To every two hundred animals a muleteer was allotted, to take charge of them on the route. Thus great lines of convoys were in constant movement, traversing the mountains to and fro, guarded by large bodies of troops, to defend them from hovering parties of the Moors. Not a single day's intermission was allowed; for the army depended upon the constant arrival of these supplies for daily food. The grain, when brought into the camp, was deposited in an immense granary, and sold to the army at a fixed price, which was never either raised or lowered.

Incredible were the expenses incurred in this business; but the queen had ghostly advisers, thoroughly versed in the art of getting at the resources of the country. Many worthy prelates opened the deep purses of the church, and furnished loans from the revenues of their dioceses and convents; and their pious contributions were eventually rewarded by Providence a hundred fold. Merchants and other wealthy individuals, confident of the punctual faith of the queen, advanced large sums on the security of her word: many noble families lent their plate without waiting to be asked. The queen,

also, sold certain annual rents in inheritance, at great sacrifices, assigning the revenues of towns and cities for the payment. Finding all this insufficient to satisfy the enormous expenditure, she sent her gold and plate, and all her jewels, to the cities of Valencia and Barcelona, where they were pledged for a great amount of money; which was immediately appropriated to keep up the supplies of the army.

Thus, through the wonderful activity, judgment, and enterprise of this heroic and magnanimous woman, a great host, encamped in the heart of a warlike country, accessible only over mountain roads, was maintained in continual abundance: nor was it supplied merely with the necessaries and comforts of life. The powerful escorts drew merchants and artificers from all parts, to repair, as if in caravans, to this great military market. In a little while the camp abounded with tradesmen and artists of all kinds, to administer to the luxury and ostentation of the youthful chivalry. Here might be seen cunning artificers in steel, and accomplished armourers, achieving those rare and sumptuous helmets and cuirasses richly guilt, inlaid, and embossed, in which the Spanish cavaliers delighted; saddlers and harness-makers, and horse-milliners also, whose tents glittered with gorgeous housings and caparisons. The merchants spread forth their sumptuous silks, cloths, brocades, fine linen, and tapestry. The tents of the nobility were prodigally decorated with all kinds of the richest stuffs, and dazzled the eye with their magnificence: nor could the grave looks and grave speeches of King Ferdinand prevent his youthful cavaliers from vyeing with each other in the splendour of their dresses and caparisons, on all occasions of parade and ceremony.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

While the Christian camp, thus gay and gorgeous, spread itself out like a holiday pageant before the walls of Baza; while a long line of beasts of burden, laden with provisions and luxuries, were seen descending the valley from morning till night, and pouring into the camp a continued stream of abundance, the unfortunate garrison found their resources rapidly wasting away, and famine already began to pinch the peaceful part of the community.

Cidi Yahye had acted with great spirit and valour, as long as there was any prospect of success; but he began to lose his usual fire and animation, and was observed to pace the walls of Baza with a pensive air, casting many a wistful look towards the Christian camp, and sinking into profound reveries and cogitations. The veteran alcayde, Mohammed Ben Hassen, noticed these desponding moods, and endeavoured to rally the spirits of the prince. "The rainy season is at hand," would he cry: "the floods will soon pour down from the mountains; the rivers will overflow their banks, and inundate the valleys. The Christian king already begins to waver; he dare not linger, and encounter such a season, in a plain cut up by canals and rivulets. A single wintry storm from our mountains would wash away his canvas city, and sweep off those gay pavilions, like wreaths of snow before the blast.

The Prince Cidi Yahye took heart at these words, and counted the days as they passed, until the stormy season should commence. As he watched the Christian camp, he beheld it one morning in universal commotion. There was an unusual sound of hammers in every part, as if some new engines of war were constructing. At length, to his astonishment, the walls and roofs of houses began to appear above the bulwarks. In a little while there were above a thousand edifices of wood and plaster erected, covered with tiles, taken from the demolished towers of the orchards, and bearing the pennons of various commanders and cavaliers; while the common soldiery constructed huts of clay and branches of trees, and thatched them with straw. Thus, to the dismay of the Moors, within four days the light tents and gay pavilions, which had whitened their hills and plains, passed away like summer clouds; and the unsubstantial camp assumed the solid appearance of a city laid out into streets and squares. In the centre rose a large edifice, which overlooked the whole, and the royal standard of Arragon and Castile, proudly floating above it, showed it to be the palace of the king.*

Ferdinand had taken the sudden resolution thus to turn his camp into a city, partly to provide against the approaching season, and partly to convince the Moors of his fixed determination to continue the siege. In their haste to erect their

* Cura de los Palacios. Pulgar, &c.

dwellings, however, the Spanish cavaliers had not properly considered the nature of the climate. For the greater part of the year there scarcely falls a drop of rain on the thirsty soil of Andalusia; the ramblas, or dry channels of the torrents, remain deep and arid gashes and clefts in the sides of the mountains. The perennial streams shrink up to mere threads of water, which, tinkling down the bottoms of the deep barrancas or ravines, scarcely feed and keep alive the rivers of the valleys. The rivers, almost lost in their wide and naked body, seem like thirsty rills, winding in serpentine mazes through deserts of sand and stones: and so shallow and tranquil in their course, as to be forded in safety in almost every part. One autumnal tempest of rain, however, changes the whole face of nature. The clouds break in deluges among the vast congregation of mountains. The ramblas are suddenly filled with raging floods, the tinkling rivulets swell to thundering torrents, that come roaring down from the mountains, precipitating great masses of rocks in their career. The late meandering river spreads over its once naked bed, lashes its surges against the banks, and rushes, like a wide and foaming inundation, through the valley.*

Scarcely had the Christians finished their slightly built edifices; when an autumnal tempest of the kind came scouring from the mountains. The camp was immediately overflowed. Many of the houses, undermined by the floods or beaten by the rain, crumbled away, and fell to the earth, burying man and beast beneath their ruins. Several valuable lives were lost, and great numbers of horses and other animals perished. To add to the distress and confusion of the camp, the daily supply of provisions suddenly ceased; for the rain had broken up the roads, and rendered the rivers impassable. A panic seized upon the army, for the cessation of a single day's supply produced a scarcity of bread and provender. Fortunately, the rain was but transient. The torrents rushed by, and ceased; the rivers shrunk back again to their narrow channels; and the convoys, that had been detained upon their banks, arrived safely in the camp.

No sooner did Queen Isabella hear of this interruption of her supplies, than, with her usual vigilance and activity, she provided against its recurrence. She despatched six thousand foot soldiers, under the command of experienced officers, to repair the roads, and to make causeways and bridges, for the

distance of seven Spanish leagues. The troops, also, who had been stationed in the mountains by the king, to guard the defiles, made two paths, one for the convoys going to the camp, and the other for those returning, that they might not meet and impede each other. The edifices, which had been demolished by the late floods, were rebuilt in a firmer manner, and precautions were taken to protect the camp from future inundations.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

When King Ferdinand beheld the ravage and confusion produced by a single autumnal storm, and bethought him of all the maladies to which a besieging camp is exposed, in inclement seasons, he began to feel his compassion kindling for the suffering people of Baza, and an inclination to grant them more favourable terms. He sent, therefore, several messages to the alcayde, Mohammed ben Hassan, offering liberty of person and security of property for the inhabitants, and large rewards for himself, if he would surrender the city. The veteran Mohammed was not to be dazzled by the splendid offers of the monarch. He had received exaggerated accounts of the damage done to the Christian camp by the late storm, and of the sufferings and discontents of the army, in consequence of the transient interruption of supplies. He considered the overtures of Ferdinand as proofs of the desperate state of his affairs. "A little more patience," said the shrewd old warrior, "and we shall see this crowd of Christian locusts driven away before the winter storms. When they once turn their backs, it will be our lot to strike; and, with the help of Allah, the blow shall be decisive." He sent a firm, though courteous, refusal to the Christian monarch; and, in the meantime, animated his companions to sally forth, with more spirit than ever, to attack the Spanish outposts, and those labouring in the trenches. The consequence was a daily occurrence of the most daring and bloody skirmishes, that cost the lives of many of the bravest and most adventurous cavaliers of either army.

In one of these sallies, near three hundred horse and two thousand foot mounted the heights behind the city, to capture the Christians who were employed upon the works. They came by surprise upon a body of guards, esquires of the Count

de Ureña; killed some, put the rest to flight, and pursued them down the mountain, until they came in sight of a small force under the Count de Tendilla and Gonsalvo of Cordova. The Moors came rushing down with such fury, that many of the men of the Count de Tendilla betook themselves to flight. The brave count considered it less dangerous to fight than to flee. Bracing his buckler, therefore, and grasping his trusty weapon, he stood his ground with his accustomed prowess. Gonsalvo of Cordova ranged himself by his side; and, marshalling the troops which remained with them, a valiant front was made to the Moors.

The infidels pressed them hard, and were gaining the advantage, when Alonzo de Aguilar, hearing of the danger of his brother Gonsalvo, flew to his assistance, accompanied by the Count of Ureña and a body of their troops. A hot contest ensued, from cliff to cliff and glen to glen. The Moors were fewer in number; but they excelled in the dexterity and lightness requisite for these scrambling skirmishes. They were at length driven from their vantage ground, and pursued by Alonzo de Aguilar and his brother Gonsalvo to the very suburbs of the city; leaving many of the bravest of their men upon the field.

Such was one of innumerable rough encounters, which were daily taking place; in which many brave cavaliers were slain, without any apparent benefit to either party. The Moors, notwithstanding repeated defeats and losses, continued to sally forth daily with astonishing spirit and vigour; and the obstinacy of their defence seemed to increase with their sufferings.

The Prince Cidi Yahye was ever foremost in these sallies; but he grew daily more despairing of success. All the money in the military chest was expended, and there was no longer wherewithal to pay the hired troops. Still the veteran Mohammed ben Hassan undertook to provide for this emergency. Summoning the principal inhabitants, he represented the necessity of some exertion and sacrifice on their part, to maintain the defence of the city. "The enemy," said he, "dreads the approach of winter, and our perseverance drives him to despair. A little longer, and he will leave you in quiet enjoyment of your towers and families. But our troops must be paid, to keep them in good heart. Our money is exhausted, and all our supplies are cut off. It is impossible to continue our defence without your aid."

Upon this the citizens consulted together; and they collected all their vessels of gold and silver, and brought them to Mohammed ben Hassan. "Take these," said they, "and coin them, or sell them, or pledge them for money wherewith to pay the troops." The women of Baza, also, were seized with generous emulation. "Shall we deck ourselves with gorgeous apparel," said they, "when our country is desolate, and its defenders in want of bread?" So they took their collars, and bracelets, and anklets, and other ornaments of gold, and all their jewels, and placed them in the hands of the veteran alcayde. "Take these spoils of our vanity," said they, "and let them contribute to the defence of our homes and families. If Baza be delivered we need no jewels to grace our rejoicing; and if Baza falls, of what avail are ornaments to the captive?"

By these contributions was Mohammed enabled to pay the soldiery, and to carry on the defence of the city with unabated spirit. Tidings were speedily conveyed to King Ferdinand of this generous devotion on the part of the people of Baza, and the hopes which the Moorish commanders gave them that the Christian army would soon abandon the siege in despair. "They shall have a convincing proof of the fallacy of such hopes," said the politic monarch. So he wrote forthwith to Queen Isabella, praying her to come to the camp in state, with all her train and retinue, and publicly to take up her residence there for the winter. By these means the Moors would be convinced of the settled determination of the sovereigns to persist in the siege until the city should surrender, and he trusted they would be brought to speedy capitulation.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

MOHAMMED BEN HASSAN still encouraged his companions with hopes that the royal army would soon relinquish the siege, when they heard one day shouts of joy from the Christian camp, and thundering salvos of artillery. Word was brought at the same time, from the sentinels on the watch-towers, that a Christian army was approaching down the valley. Mohammed and his fellow commanders ascended one of the highest towers of the walls, and beheld in truth a numerous force in shining array descending the hills, and heard the distant clangour of the trumpets and the faint swell of the

triumphant music. As the host drew nearer, they descried a stately dame magnificently attired, whom they soon discovered to be the queen. She was riding on a mule, the sumptuous trappings of which were resplendent with gold, and reached to the ground. On her right hand rode her daughter, the Princess Isabella, equally splendid in her array; on her left, the venerable grand cardinal of Spain. A noble train of ladies and cavaliers followed her, together with pages and esquires, and a numerous guard of hidalgos of high rank, arrayed in superb armour. When the veteran Mohammed ben Hassan beheld that this was the Queen Isabella arriving in state to take up her residence in the camp, his heart failed him. He shook his head mournfully, and turning to his captains, "Cavaliers," said he, "the fate of Baza is decided!"

The Moorish commanders remained gazing with a mingled feeling of grief and admiration at this magnificent pageant, which foreboded the fall of their city. Some of the troops would have sallied forth in one of their desperate skirmishes to attack the royal guard, but the Prince Cidi Yahye forbade them; nor would he allow any artillery to be discharged, or any molestation or insult to be offered; for the character of Isabella was venerated even by the Moors, and most of the commanders possessed that high and chivalrous courtesy which belongs to heroic spirits, for they were among the noblest and bravest cavaliers of the Moorish nation.

The inhabitants of Baza, when they learned that the Christian queen was approaching the camp, eagerly sought every eminence that could command a view of the plain, and every battlement, and tower, and mosque, was covered with turbaned heads gazing at the glorious spectacle. They beheld King Ferdinand issue forth in royal state, attended by the Marquis of Cadiz, the master of Santiago, the Duke of Alva, the Admiral of Castile, and many other nobles of renown, while the whole chivalry of the camp, sumptuously arrayed, followed in his train, and the populace rent the air with acclamations at the sight of the patriot queen.

When the sovereigns had met and embraced each other, the two hosts mingled together and entered the camp in martial pomp, and the eyes of the infidel beholders were dazzled by the flash of armour, the splendour of golden caparisons, the gorgeous display of silks, and brocades, and velvets, of tossing plumes and fluttering banners. There was at the same time

a triumphant sound of drums and trumpets, clarions and sackbuts, mingled with the sweet melody of the dulcimer, which came swelling in bursts of harmony that seemed to rise up to the heavens.*

"On the arrival of the queen," says the historian Hernando del Pulgar, who was present at the time, "it was marvellous to behold how, all at once, the rigour and turbulence of war was softened, and the storm of passions sunk into a calm. The sword was sheathed, the crossbow no longer launched its deadly shafts, and the artillery, which had hitherto kept up an incessant uproar, now ceased its thundering. On both sides there was still a vigilant guard kept up, the sentinels bristled the walls of Bazá with their lances, and the guards patrolled the Christian camp, but there was no sallying forth to skirmish, nor any wanton violence or carnage.

Prince Cidi Yahye saw by the arrival of the queen that the Christians were determined to continue the siege, and he knew that the city would have to capitulate. He had been prodigal of the lives of his soldiers as long as he thought a military good was to be gained by the sacrifice, but he was sparing of their blood in a hopeless cause, and wary of exasperating the enemy by an obstinate hopeless defence.

At the request of Prince Cidi Yahye a parley was granted, and the master commander of Leon, Don Gutiere de Cardeñas, was appointed to confer with the valiant alcayde Mahommed. They met at an appointed place, within view of both camp and city, honourably attended by cavaliers of either army. Their meeting was highly courteous, for they had learned, from rough encounters in the field, to admire each other's prowess. The commander of Leon, in an earnest speech, pointed out the hopelessness of any further defence, and warned Mahommed of the ills which Malaga had incurred by its obstinacy. "I promise, in the name of my sovereign," said he, "that if you surrender immediately, the inhabitants shall be treated as subjects, and protected in property, liberty, and religion; if you refuse, you, who are now renowned as an able and judicious commander, will be chargeable with the confiscations, captivities, and deaths, which may be suffered by the people of Baza."

The commander ceased, and Mohammed returned to the city to consult with his companions. It was evident that all

* Cura de los Palacios.

further resistance was hopeless, but the Moorish commanders felt that a cloud might rest upon their names should they, of their own discretion, surrender so important a place without its having sustained an assault. Prince Cidi Yahye requested permission, therefore, to send an envoy to Guadix with a letter to the old monarch, El Zagal, treating of the surrender. The request was granted, a safe conduct assured to the envoy, and the veteran alcayde, Mohammed ben Hassan, departed upon this momentous mission.

CHAPTER LXXX.

The old warrior king was seated in an inner chamber of the castle of Guadix, much cast down in spirit, and ruminating on his gloomy fortunes, when an envoy from Baza was announced, and the veteran alcayde Mohammed stood before him. El Zagal saw disastrous tidings written in his countenance. "How fares it with Baza?" said he, summoning up his spirits to the question. "Let this inform thee," replied Mohammed; and he delivered into his hands the letter from the Prince Cidi Yahye. This letter spoke of the desperate situation of Baza, the impossibility of holding out longer, without assistance from El Zagal, and the favourable terms offered by the Castilian sovereigns. Had it been written by any other person, El Zagal might have received it with distrust and indignation; but he confided in Cidi Yahye as in a second self; and the words of his letter sunk deep in his heart. When he had finished reading it, he sighed deeply, and remained for some time lost in thought, with his head drooping upon his bosom. Recovering himself at length, he called together the alfaquis, and the old men of Guadix; and, communicating the tidings from Baza, solicited their advice. It was a sign of sore trouble of mind and dejection of heart, when El Zagal sought the advice of others; but his fierce courage was tamed, for he saw the end of his power approaching. The alfaquis and the old men did but increase the distraction of his mind by a variety of counsel, none of which appeared of any avail; for, unless Baza were succoured, it was impossible that it should hold out, and every attempt to succour it had proved ineffectual.

El Zagal dismissed his council in despair, and summoned the veteran Mohammed before him. "Allah, achbar!"

exclaimed he, "God is great; there is but one God, and Mahomet is his prophet! Return to my cousin, Cidi Yahye, tell him it is out of my power to aid him; he must do as seems to him for the best. The people of Baza have performed deeds worthy of immortal fame: I cannot ask them to encounter further ills and perils, in maintaining a hopeless defence."

The reply of El Zagal determined the fate of the city. Cidi Yahye and his fellow commanders, immediately capitulated, and were granted the most favourable terms. The cavaliers and soldiers, who had come from other parts to the defence of the place, were permitted to depart freely, with their arms, horses, and effects. The inhabitants had their choice, either to depart with their property, or to dwell in the suburbs, in the enjoyment of their religion and laws; taking an oath of fealty to the sovereigns, and paying the same tribute they had paid to the Moorish kings. The city and citadel were to be delivered up in six days; within which period the inhabitants were to remove all their effects; and, in the meantime, they were to place, as hostages, fifteen Moorish youths, sons of the principal inhabitants, in the hands of the commanders of Leon. When Cidi Yahye and the alcayde Mohammed came to deliver up the hostages, among whom were the sons of the latter, they paid homage to the king and queen; who received them with the utmost courtesy and kindness, and ordered magnificent presents to be given to them, and likewise to the other Moorish cavaliers; consisting of money, robes, horses, and other things of great value.

The Prince Cidi Yahye was so captivated by the grace, the dignity, and generosity of Isabella, and the princely courtesy of Ferdinand, that he vowed never again to draw his sword against such magnanimous sovereigns.

The queen, charmed with his gallant bearing and his animated profession of devotion, assured him, that, having him on her side, she already considered the war terminated, which had desolated the kingdom of Granada.

Mighty and irresistible are words of praise from the lips of sovereigns. Cidi Yahye was entirely subdued by this fair speech from the illustrious Isabella. His heart burned with a sudden flame of loyalty towards the sovereigns. He begged to be enrolled amongst the most devoted of their subjects; and, in the fervour of his sudden zeal, engaged, not merely to

dedicate his sword to their service, but to exert all his influence, which was great, in persuading his cousin, Muley Abdalla el Zagal, to surrender the cities of Guadix and Almeria, and to give up all further hostilities. Nay, so powerful was the effect produced upon his mind by his conversations with the sovereigns, that it extended even to his religion; for he became immediately enlightened as to the heathenish abominations of the vile sect of Mahomet, and struck with the truths of Christianity, as illustrated by such powerful monarchs. He consented, therefore, to be baptized, and to be gathered into the fold of the church. The pious Agapida indulges in a triumphant strain of exultation, on the sudden and surprising conversion of this princely infidel. He considers it one of the greatest achievements of the Catholic sovereigns; and, indeed, one of the marvellous occurrences of this holy war. "But it is given to saints and pious monarchs," says he, "to work miracles in the cause of the faith; and such did the most Catholic Ferdinand, in the conversion of the Prince Cidi Yahye."

Some of the Arabian writers have sought to lessen the wonder of this miracle, by alluding to great revenues, granted to the prince and his heirs by the Castilian monarchs; together with a territory in Marchena, with towns, lands, and vassals. "But in this," says Agapida, "we only see a wise precaution of King Ferdinand, to clinch and secure the conversion of his proselyte." The policy of the Catholic monarch was at all times equal to his piety. Instead also of vaunting of this great conversion, and making a public parade of the entry of the prince into the church, King Ferdinand ordered, that the baptism should be performed in private, and kept a profound secret. He feared that Cidi Yahye might otherwise be denounced as an apostate and abhorred and abandoned by the Moors; and thus his influence destroyed in bringing the war to a speedy termination.*

The veteran Mohammed ben Hassan was likewise won by the magnanimity and munificence of the Castilian sovereigns, and entreated to be received into their service; and his example was followed by many other Moorish cavaliers, whose services were graciously accepted and magnificently rewarded.

Thus, after a siege of six months and twenty days, the city

* Conde, tom. iii. cap. 40.

of Baza surrendered, on the 4th of December, 1489, the festival of the glorious Santa Barbara; who is said, in the Catholic calendar, to preside over thunder and lightning, fire and gunpowder, and all kinds of combustible explosions. The king and queen made their solemn and triumphal entry on the following day; and the public joy was heightened by the sight of upwards of five hundred Christian captives, men, women, and children, delivered from the Moorish dungeons.

The loss of the Christians, in this siege, amounted to twenty thousand men; of whom seventeen thousand died of disease, and not a few of mere cold; "a kind of death," says the historian Mariana, "peculiarly uncomfortable. But," adds the venerable Jesuit, "as these latter were chiefly people of ignoble rank, baggage carriers and such like, the loss was not of great importance."

The surrender of Baza was followed by that of Almuñeçar, Tavernas, and most of the fortresses of the Alpuxarra mountains. The inhabitants hoped, by prompt and voluntary submission, to secure equally favourable terms with those granted to the captured city; and the alcaydes, to receive similar rewards to those lavished on its commanders; nor were either of them disappointed. The inhabitants were permitted to remain as Mudexarras, in the quiet enjoyment of their property and religion; and as to the alcaydes, when they came to the camp to render up their charges, they were received by Ferdinand with distinguished favour, and rewarded with presents of money, in proportion to the importance of the places they had commanded. Care was taken by the politic monarch, however, not to wound their pride, or shock their delicacy; so these sums were paid, under colour of arrears due to them, for their services to the former government. Ferdinand had conquered, by dint of sword, in the earlier part of the war; but he found gold as potent as steel in this campaign of Baza.

With several of these mercenary chieftains came one, named Ali Aben Fahar, a seasoned warrior, who had held many important commands. He was a Moor, of a lofty, stern, and melancholy aspect; and stood silent and apart, while his companions surrendered their several fortresses, and retired laden with treasure. When it came to his turn to speak, he addressed the sovereigns with the frankness of a soldier, but with a tone of dejection and despair. "I am a

Moor," said he, "and of Moorish lineage; and am alcayde of the fair towns and castles of Purchena and Paterna. These were intrusted to me to defend; but those, that should have stood by me, have lost all strength and courage, and seek only for security. These fortresses, therefore, most potent sovereigns, are yours, whenever you will send to take possession of them."

Large sums of money in gold were immediately ordered by Ferdinand to be delivered to the alcayde, as a recompense for so important a surrender. The Moor, however, put back the gift with a firm and haughty demeanour. "I come not," said he, "to sell what is not mine, but to yield what fortune has made yours; and your majesties may rest assured, that, had I been properly seconded, death would have been the price at which I would have sold my fortresses, and not the gold you offer me."

The Castilian monarchs were struck with the lofty and loyal spirit of the Moor, and desired to engage a man of such fidelity in their service; but the proud Moslem could not be induced to serve the enemies of his nation and his faith.

"Is there nothing, then," said Queen Isabella, "that we can do to gratify thee, and to prove to thee our regard?" "Yes," replied the Moor, "I have left behind me, in the towns and valleys which I have surrendered, many of my unhappy countrymen, with their wives and children, who cannot tear themselves from their native abodes. Give me your royal word that they shall be protected in the peaceable enjoyment of their religion and their homes." "We promise it," said Isabella; "they shall dwell in peace and security. But for thyself: what dost thou ask for thyself?" "Nothing," replied Ali, "but permission to pass unmolested, with horses and effects, into Africa."

The Castilian monarchs would fain have forced upon him gold and silver, and superb horses richly caparisoned; not as rewards, but as marks of personal esteem: but Ali Aben Fahar declined all presents and distinctions, as if he thought it criminal to flourish individually, during a time of public distress; and disdained all prosperity that seemed to grow out of the ruins of his country.

Having received a royal passport, he gathered together his horses and servants, his armour and weapons, and all his warlike effects, bade adieu to his weeping countrymen, with

a brow stamped with anguish, but without shedding a tear, and, mounting his Barbary steed, turned his back upon the delightful valleys of his conquered country; departing on his lonely way, to seek a soldier's fortune amidst the burning sands of Africa.*

CHAPTER LXXXI.

EVIL tidings never fail by the way through lack of messengers. They are wafted on the wings of the wind; and it is if the very birds of the air would bear them to the ear of the unfortunate. The old king, El Zagal, buried himself in the recesses of his castle, to hide himself from the light of day, which no longer shone prosperously upon him; but every hour brought missives, thundering at the gate with the tale of some new disaster. Fortress after fortress had laid its keys at the feet of the Christian sovereigns. Strip by strip of warrior mountain and green fruitful valley was torn from his domains, and added to the territories of the conquerors. Scarcely a remnant remained to him, except a tract of the Alpuxarras, and the noble cities of Guadix and Almeria. No one any longer stood in awe of the fierce old monarch: the terror of his frown had declined with his power. He had arrived at that stage of adversity, when a man's friends feel emboldened to tell him hard truths, and to give him unpalatable advice, and when his spirit is bowed down to listen quietly, if not meekly.

El Zagal was seated on his divan, his whole spirit absorbed in rumination on the transitory nature of human glory, when his kinsman and brother-in-law, the Prince Cidi Yahye, was announced. That illustrious convert to the true faith, and the interest of the conquerors of his country, had hastened to Guadix with all the fervour of a new proselyte, eager to prove his zeal in the service of Heaven and the Castilian sovereigns, by persuading the old monarch to abjure his faith, and surrender his possessions.

Cidi Yahye still bore the guise of a Moslem; for his conversion was as yet a secret. The stern heart of El Zagal softened at beholding the face of a kinsman, in this hour of adversity. He folded his cousin to his bosom, and gave hanks to Allah, that, amidst all his troubles, he had still a

* Pulgar. Garibay, lib. xl. cap. 40. Cura de los Palacios.

friend and counsellor, on whom he might rely. Cidi Yahye soon entered upon the real purpose of his mission. He represented to El Zagal the desperate state of affairs, and the irretrievable decline of Moorish power in the kingdom of Granada. "Fate," said he, "is against our arms; our ruin is written in the heavens: remember the prediction of the astrologers, at the birth of your nephew Boabdil. We had hoped, that their prediction was accomplished by his capture at Lucena; but it is now evident, that the stars portended, not a temporary and passing reverse of the kingdom, but a final overthrow. The constant succession of disasters, which have attended our efforts, show, that the sceptre of Granada is doomed to pass into the hands of the Christian monarchs. Such," concluded the prince, emphatically, and with a pious reverence, "such is the almighty will of God!"

El Zagal listened to these words in mute attention, without so much as moving a muscle of his face, or winking an eye-lid. When the prince had concluded, he remained for a long time silent and pensive. At length, heaving a profound sigh from the very bottom of his heart. "Alahuma subahana hu!" exclaimed he, "the will of God be done! Yes, my cousin, it is but too evident, that such is the will of Allah; and what he wills, he fails not to accomplish. Had he not decreed the fall of Granada, this arm, and this cimeter, would have maintained it."*

"What then remains," said Cidi Yahye, "but to draw the most advantage from the wreck of empire that is left you? To persist in a war, is to bring complete desolation upon the land, and ruin and death upon its faithful inhabitants. Are you disposed to yield up your remaining towns to your nephew, El Chiquito, that they may augment his power, and derive protection from his alliance with the Christian sovereigns?"

The eye of El Zagal flashed fire at this suggestion. He grasped the hilt of his cimeter, and gnashed his teeth in fury. "Never," cried he, "will I make terms with that recreant and slave! sooner would I see the banners of the Christian monarchs floating above my walls, than they should add to the possessions of the vassal Boabdil!"

Cidi Yahye immediately seized upon this idea, and urged El Zagal to make a frank and entire surrender. "Trust,"

* Conde, t. iii. c. 40.

said he, "to the magnanimity of the Castilian sovereigns. They will doubtless grant you high and honourable terms. It is better to yield to them as friends, what they must infallibly and before long wrest from you as enemies: for such, my cousin, is the almighty will of God!" "Alahuma subahana hu!" repeated El Zagal, "the will of God be done!" So the old monarch bowed his haughty neck, and agreed to surrender his territories to the enemies of his faith, rather than suffer them to augment the Moslem power, under the sway of his nephew.

Cidi Yahye now returned to Baza, empowered by El Zagal to treat, on his behalf, with the Christian sovereigns. The prince felt a species of exultation, as he expatiated on the rich relics of empire, which he was authorized to cede. There was a great part of that line of mountains, which extends from the metropolis to the Mediterranean Sea, with its series of beautiful green valleys, like precious emeralds set in a golden chain. Above all these were Guadix and Almeria, two of the most inestimable jewels in the crown of Granada.

In return for these possessions, and for the claim of El Zagal to the rest of the kingdom, the sovereigns received him into their friendship and alliance, and gave him, in perpetual inheritance, the territory of Alhamin, in the Alpuxarras, with half of the salinas, or salt pits, of Maleha. He was to enjoy the title of King of Andaraxa, with two thousand Mudejares, or conquered Moors, for subjects; and his revenues were to be made up to the sum of four millions of maravedis:* all these he was to hold as a vassal of the Castilian crown.

These arrangements being made, Cidi Yahye returned with them to Muley Abdalla; and it was concerted, that the ceremony of surrender and homage should take place at the city of Almeria.

On the 17th of December, King Ferdinand departed from Baza, with a part of his army, and the queen soon followed with the remainder. Ferdinand passed in triumph by several of the newly acquired towns, exulting in these trophies of his policy rather than his valour. As he drew near to Almeria, the Moorish king came forth to meet him, accompanied by the Prince Cidi Yahye, and a number of the principal inhabitants on horseback. The fierce brow of El Zagal was clouded with a kind of forced humility; but there was an

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 94.

impatient curl of the lip, with now and then a swelling of the bosom, and an indignant breathing from the distended nostril. It was evident he considered himself conquered, not by the power of man, but by the hand of Heaven; and while he bowed to the decrees of fate, it galled his proud spirit to have to humble himself before its mortal agent. As he approached the Christian king, he alighted from his horse, and advanced to kiss his hand, in token of homage. Ferdinand, however, respected the royal title which the Moor had held, and would not permit the ceremony, but, bending from his saddle, graciously embraced him, and requested him to remount his steed.* Several courteous speeches passed between them, and the fortress and city of Almeria, and all the remaining territories of El Zagal, were delivered up in form. When all was accomplished, the old warrior Moor retired to the mountains, with a handful of adherents, to seek his petty territory of Andaraxa, to bury his humiliation from the world, and to console himself with the shadowy title of a king.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

WHO can tell when to rejoice in this fluctuating world? Every wave of prosperity has its reacting surge, and we are often overwhelmed by the very billow, on which we thought to be wafted into the haven of our hopes. When Jusef Aben Conmixa, the vizier of Boabdil, surnamed El Chico, entered the royal saloon of the Alhambra, and announced the capitulation of El Zagal, the heart of the youthful monarch leaped for joy. His great wish was accomplished; his uncle was defeated and dethroned; and he reigned, without a rival, sole monarch of Granada. At length he was about to enjoy the fruits of his humiliation and vassalage. He beheld his throne fortified by the friendship and alliance of the Castilian monarchs; there could be no question, therefore, of its stability. "Allah achbar!" exclaimed he, "God is great! Rejoice with me, oh Jusef, the stars have ceased their persecution! Henceforth let no man call me El Zogoybi!"

In the first moment of his exultation, Boabdil would have ordered public rejoicings; but the shrewd Jusef shook his head. "The tempest has ceased," said he, "from one point of

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 93.

the heavens, but it may begin to rage from another. A troubled sea is beneath us, and we are surrounded by rocks and quicksands: let my lord the king defer rejoicings until all has settled into a calm." El Chico, however, could not remain tranquil in this day of exultation. He ordered his steed to be sumptuously caprisoned, and, issuing out of the gate of the Alhambra, descended with a glittering retinue along the avenue of trees and fountains into the city, to receive the acclamations of the populace. As he entered the great square of the vivarrambla, he beheld crowds of people in violent agitation; but, as he approached, what was his surprise to hear groans, and murmurs, and bursts of execration! The tidings had spread through Granada, that Muley Abdalla el Zagal had been driven to capitulate, and that all his territories had fallen into the hands of the Christians. No one had inquired into the particulars, but all Granada had been thrown into a ferment of grief and indignation. In the heat of the moment, old Muley was extolled to the skies as a patriot prince, who had fought to the last for the salvation of his country; as a mirror of monarchs, scorning to compromise the dignity of his crown by any act of vassalage. Boabdil, on the contrary, had looked on exultingly at the hopeless yet heroic struggle of his uncle; he had rejoiced in the defeat of the faithful, and the triumph of unbelievers. He had aided in the dismemberment and downfal of the empire. When they beheld him riding forth in gorgeous state, in what they considered a day of humiliation for all true Moslems, they could not contain their rage, and, amidst the clamours that prevailed, Boabdil more than once heard his name coupled with the epithets of traitor and renegado.

Shocked and discomfited, the youthful monarch returned in confusion to the Alhambra. He shut himself up within its innermost courts, and remained a kind of voluntary prisoner, until the first burst of popular feeling should subside. He trusted that it would soon pass away; that the people would be too sensible of the sweets of peace to repine at the price at which it was obtained; at any rate, he trusted to the strong friendship of the Christian sovereigns to secure him even against the factions of his subjects.

The first missives from the politic Ferdinand, showed Boabdil the value of his friendship.

The Catholic monarch reminded him of a treaty which he

had made, when captured in the city of Loxa. By this he had engaged, that, in case the Catholic sovereigns should capture the cities of Guadix, Baza, and Almeria, he would surrender Granada into their hands within a limited time, and accept in exchange certain Moorish towns, to be held by him as their vassal. Ferdinand now informed him that Guadix, Baza, and Almeria had fallen; he called upon him, therefore, to fulfil his engagement. If the unfortunate Boabdil had possessed the will, he had not the power to comply with this demand. He was shut up in the Alhambra, while a tempest of popular fury raged without. Granada was thronged by refugees from the captured towns, many of them disbanded soldiers; others broken down citizens, rendered fierce and desperate by ruin: all railed at Boabdil as the real cause of their misfortunes. How was he to venture forth in such a storm? above all, how was he to talk to such men of surrender? In his reply to Ferdinand, he represented the difficulties of his situation; and that, so far from having control over his subjects, his very life was in danger from their turbulence. He entreated the king, therefore, to rest satisfied for the present with his recent conquests, promising him, that should he be able to regain full empire over his capital and its inhabitants, it would be but to rule over them as vassal to the Castilian crown.

Ferdinand was not to be satisfied with such a reply. The time was come to bring his game of policy to a close, and to consummate his conquest, by seating himself on the throne of the Alhambra. Professing to consider Boabdil as a faithless ally, who had broken his plighted word, he discarded him from his friendship, and addressed a second letter, not to that monarch, but to the commanders and council of the city. He demanded a complete surrender of the place, with all the arms in the possession either of the citizens or of others who had recently taken refuge within its walls. If the inhabitants should comply with this summons, he promised them the indulgent terms which had been granted to Baza, Guadix, and Almeria: if they should refuse, he threatened them with the fate of Malaga.*

The message of the Catholic monarch produced the greatest commotion in the city. The inhabitants of the alcaceria, that busy hive of traffic, and all others who had tasted the sweets

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. 96.

of gainful commerce during the late cessation of hostilities, were for securing their golden advantages by timely submission: others, who had wives and children, looked on them with tenderness and solicitude, and dreaded, by resistance, to bring upon them the horrors of slavery. But, on the other hand, Granada was crowded with men from all parts, ruined by the war, exasperated by their sufferings, and eager only for revenge; with others, who had been reared amidst hostilities, who had lived by the sword, and whom a return of peace would leave without home or hope. There were others too, no less fiery and warlike in disposition, but animated by a loftier spirit, valiant and haughty cavaliers, of the old chivalrous lineages, who had inherited a deadly hatred to the Christians from a long line of warrior ancestors, and to whom the idea was worse than death that Granada, illustrious Granada, for ages the seat of Moorish grandeur and delight, should become the abode of unbelievers. Among these cavaliers, the most eminent was Muza ben Abil Gazan. He was of royal lineage, of a proud and generous nature, and a form combining manly strength and beauty. None could excel him in the management of the horse, and dexterous use of all kinds of weapons. His gracefulness and skill in the tourney was the theme of praise among the Moorish dames; and his prowess in the field had made him the terror of the enemy. He had long repined at the timid policy of Boabdil, and had endeavoured to counteract its enervating effects, and to keep alive the martial spirit of Granada. For this reason he had promoted jousts, and tiltings with the reed, and all those other public games which bear the semblance of war. He endeavoured, also, to inculcate into his companions in arms those high chivalrous sentiments which lead to valiant and magnanimous deeds, but which are apt to decline with the independence of a nation. The generous efforts of Muza had been in a great measure successful: he was the idol of the youthful cavaliers; they regarded him as a mirror of chivalry, and endeavoured to imitate his lofty and heroic virtues.

When Muza heard the demand of Ferdinand, that they should deliver up his arms, his eyes flashed fire. "Does the Christian king think that we are old men," said he, "and that staffs will suffice us? or that we are women, and can be contented with distaffs? Let him know, that a Moor is born to the spear and the cimeter; to career the steed, bend the bow,

and lanch the javelin: deprive him of these, and you deprive him of his nature. If the Christian king desire our arms, let him come and win them; but let him win them dearly. For my part, sweeter were a grave beneath the walls of Granada, on the spot I had died to defend, than the richest couch within her palaces, earned by submission to the unbeliever."

The words of Muza were received with enthusiastic shouts by the warlike part of the populace. Granada once more awoke as a warrior shaking off a disgraceful lethargy. The commanders and council partook of the public excitement, and despatched a reply to the Christian sovereigns, declaring that they would suffer death rather than surrender their city.

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

WHEN King Ferdinand received the defiance of the Moors, he made preparations for bitter hostilities. The winter season did not admit of an immediate campaign: he contented himself, therefore, with throwing strong garrisons into all his towns and fortresses in the neighbourhood of Granada, and gave the command of all the frontier of Jaen to Inigo Lopez de Mendoza, count of Tendilla, who had shown such consummate vigilance and address in maintaining the dangerous post of Alhama. This renowned veteran established his head-quarters in the mountain city of Alcala la Real, within eight leagues of the city of Granada, and commanding the most important passes of that rugged frontier.

In the meantime, the city of Granada resounded with the stir of war. The chivalry of the nation had again control of its councils; and the populace, having once more resumed their weapons, were anxious to wipe out the disgrace of their late passive submission, by signal and daring exploits.

Muza ben Abil Gazan was the soul of action. He commanded the cavalry, which he had disciplined with uncommon skill. He was surrounded by the noblest youth of Granada, who had caught his own generous and martial fire, and panted for the field; while the common soldiers, devoted to his person, were ready to follow him in the most desperate enterprises. He did not allow their courage to cool for want of action. The gates of Granada once more poured forth legions of light scouring cavalry, which skirred the country up to the very gates of the Christian fortresses; sweeping off

flocks and herds. The name of Muza became formidable throughout the frontier. He had many encounters with the enemy, in the rough passes of the mountains; in which the superior lightness and dexterity of his cavalry gave him the advantage. The sight of his glistening legion, returning across the vega with long cavalgadas of booty, was hailed by the Moors as a revival of their ancient triumphs; but when they beheld Christian banners, borne into their gates as trophies, the exultation of the light minded populace was beyond all bounds. The winter passed away, the spring advanced; yet Ferdinand delayed to take the field. He knew the city of Granada to be too strong and populous to be taken by assault, and too full of provisions to be speedily reduced by siege. "We must have patience and perseverance," said the politic monarch. "By ravaging the country this year, we shall produce a scarcity the next; and then the city may be invested with effect."

An interval of peace, aided by the quick vegetation of a prolific soil and happy climate, had restored the vega to all its luxuriance and beauty. The green pastures on the borders of the Xenil were covered with flocks and herds. The blooming orchards gave promise of abundant fruit; and the open plain was waving with ripening corn. The time was at hand to put in the sickle and reap the golden harvest, when, suddenly, a torrent of war came sweeping down from the mountains; and Ferdinand, with an army of five thousand horse and twenty thousand foot, appeared before the walls of Granada. He had left the queen and princess at the fortress of Moclin; and came, attended by the Duke of Medina Sidonia, the Marquis of Cadiz, the Marquis de Villena, the Counts of Ureña and Cabras, Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and other renowned cavaliers. On this occasion King Ferdinand, for the first time, led his son, Prince Juan, into the field, and bestowed upon him the dignity of knighthood. As if to stimulate him to grand achievements, the ceremony took place on the banks of the grand canal, almost beneath the embattled walls of that warlike city, the object of such daring enterprises; and in the midst of that famous vega, which had been the field of so many chivalrous exploits. High above them shone resplendent the red towers of the Alhambra, rising from amidst delicious groves; with the standard of Mahomet waving defiance to the Christian arms.

The Duke of Medina Sidonia, and the valiant Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz, were sponsors; and all the chivalry of the camp was assembled on the occasion. The prince, after he had been knighted, bestowed the same honour on several youthful cavaliers of high rank, just entering, like himself, on the career of arms.

Ferdinand did not loiter in carrying his desolating plans into execution. He detached parties in every direction, to scour the country. Villages were sacked, burnt, and destroyed, and the lovely vega once more was laid waste with fire and sword. The ravage was carried so close to Granada, that the city was wrapped in the smoke of its hamlets and gardens. The dismal cloud rolled up the hill, and hung about the towers of the Alhambra; where the unfortunate Boabdil still remained, shut up from the indignation of his subjects. The hapless monarch smote his breast, as he looked down from his mountain palace on the desolation effected by his late ally. He dared not even show himself in arms among the populace, for they cursed him as the cause of the miseries brought anew to their doors. The Moors, however, did not suffer the Christians to carry on their ravages as unmolested as in former years. Muza incited them to incessant sallies. He divided his cavalry into small squadrons, each led by a daring commander. They were taught to hover round the Christian camp; to harass it from various and opposite quarters, cutting off convoys and straggling detachments; to waylay the army in its ravaging expeditions, lurking among rocks and passes of the mountains, or in hollows and thickets of the plain; and practising a thousand stratagems and surprises.

The Christian army had one day spread itself out, rather unguardedly, in its foraging about the vega. As the troops commanded by the Marquis de Villena approached the skirts of the mountains, they beheld a number of Moorish peasants hastily driving a herd of cattle into a narrow glen. The soldiers, eager for booty, pressed in pursuit of them. Scarcely had they entered the glen, when shouts arose from every side, and they were furiously attacked by an ambuscade of horse and foot. Some of the Christians took to flight; others stood their ground and fought valiantly. The Moors had the vantage ground. Some showered darts and arrows from the clefts of the rocks; others fought, hand to hand, on the plain; while their cavalry, rapid as lightning in their movements,

carried havoc into the midst of the Christian forces. The Marquis de Villena, with his brother, Don Alonzo de Pacheco, at the first onset of the Moors, spurred into the hottest of the fight. They had scarce entered, when Don Alonzo was struck lifeless from his horse, before the eyes of his brother. Estevan de Suzon, a gallant captain, fell, fighting bravely by the side of the marquis; who remained with his chamberlain Solier, and a handful of knights, surrounded by the enemy. Several cavaliers, from other parts of the army, hastened to their assistance; when King Ferdinand, seeing that the Moors had the vantage ground, and that the Christians were suffering severely, gave signal for retreat. The marquis obeyed slowly and reluctantly; for his heart was full of grief and rage at the death of his brother. As he was retiring, he beheld his faithful chamberlain, Solier, defending himself bravely against six Moors. The marquis turned, and rushed to his rescue. He killed two of the enemy with his own hand, and put the rest to flight. One of the Moors, however, in retreating, rose in his stirrups, and, hurling his lance at the marquis, wounded him in the right arm, and crippled him for life.

In consequence of this wound, the marquis was ever after obliged to write his signature with his left hand, though capable of managing his lance with his right. The queen demanded one day of him why he had adventured his life for that of a domestic. "Does not your majesty think," replied he, "that I ought to risk one life for him, who would have adventured three for me, had he possessed them?" The queen was charmed with the magnanimity of the reply; and often quoted the marquis, as setting an heroic example to the chivalry of the age.

Such was one of the many ambuscades concerted by Muza; nor did he hesitate, at times, to present a bold front to the Christian forces, and to defy them in the open field. King Ferdinand soon perceived, however, that the Moors seldom provoked a battle without having the advantage of the ground; and that, though the Christians generally appeared to have the victory, they suffered the greatest loss; for retreating was a part of the Moorish system, by which they would draw their pursuers into confusion, and then turn upon them with a more violent and fatal attack. He commanded his captains, therefore, to decline all challenges to skirmish, and to pursue a secure system of destruction; ravaging the

country, and doing all possible injury to the enemy, with slight risk to themselves.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

About two leagues from Granada, on an eminence commanding an extensive view of the vega, stood the strong Moorish castle of Roma; a great place of refuge and security. Hither the neighbouring peasantry drove their flocks and herds, and hurried with their most precious effects, on the irruption of a Christian force; and any foraging or skirmishing party from Granada, on being intercepted in their return, threw themselves into Roma, manned its embattled towers, and set the enemy at defiance. The garrison were accustomed to these sudden claims upon their protection; to have parties of Moors clattering up to their gates, so hotly pursued, that there was barely time to throw open the portal, receive them within, and shut out their pursuers: while the Christian cavaliers had many a time reined in their panting steeds at the very entrance of the barbican, and retired, cursing the strong walls of Roma, that robbed them of their prey.

The late ravages of Ferdinand, and the continual skirmishings in the vega, had roused the vigilance of the castle. One morning early, as the sentinels kept watch upon the battlements, they beheld a cloud of dust advancing rapidly from a distance. Turbans and Moorish weapons soon caught their eyes; and as the whole approached, they descried a drove of cattle, urged on in great haste, and conveyed by one hundred and forty Moors, who led with them two Christian captives in chains.

When the cavalgada had arrived near to the castle, a Moorish cavalier of noble and commanding mien, and splendid attire, rode up to the foot of the tower, and entreated admittance. He stated, that they were returning with rich booty, from a foray into the lands of the Christians; but that the enemy was on their traces, and they feared to be overtaken before they could reach Granada. The sentinels descended in all haste, and flung open the gates. The long cavalgada defiled into the courts of the castle, which were soon filled with lowing and bleating flocks and herds, with neighing and stamping steeds, and with fierce-looking Moors from the mountains. The cavalier, who had asked admission, was the chief of the party; he was somewhat advanced in life, of a lofty

and gallant bearing, and had with him a son, a young man of great fire and spirit. Close by them followed the two Christian captives, with looks cast down and disconsolate.

The soldiers of the garrison had roused themselves from their sleep, and were busily occupied attending to the cattle, which crowded the courts; while the foraging party distributed themselves about the castle, to seek refreshment or repose. Suddenly a shout arose, that was echoed from court-yard, and hall, and battlements. The garrison, astonished and bewildered, would have rushed to their arms, but found themselves, almost before they could make resistance, completely in the power of an enemy.

The pretended foraging party consisted of Mudexares, Moors tributary to the Christians; and the commanders were the Prince Cidi Yahye, and his son, Alnayer. They had hastened from the mountains, with this small force, to aid the Catholic sovereigns during the summer's campaign; and they had concerted to surprise that important castle, and present it to King Ferdinand, as a gage of their faith and the first fruits of their devotion.

The politic monarch overwhelmed his new converts and allies with favours and distinctions, in return for this important acquisition; but he took care to despatch a strong force of veterans, and genuine Christian troops to man the fortress.

As to the Moors who had composed the garrison, Cidi Yahye remembered that they were his countrymen, and could not prevail upon himself to deliver them into Christian bondage. He set them at liberty, and permitted them to repair to Granada; "a proof," says the pious Agapida, "that his conversion was not entirely consummated, but that there were still some lingerings of the infidel in his heart." His lenity was far from procuring him indulgence in the opinions of his countrymen: on the contrary, the inhabitants of Granada, when they learned from the liberated garrison the stratagem by which Roma had been captured, cursed Cidi Yahye for a traitor, and the garrison joined in the malediction.

But the indignation of the people of Granada was destined to be aroused to tenfold violence. The old warrior, Muley Abdalla El Zagal, had retired to his little mountain territory, and for a short time endeavoured to console himself with his petty title of King of Andaraxa. He soon grew impatient, however, of the quiet and inaction of his mimic kingdom. His

fierce spirit was exasperated by being shut up within such narrow limits; and his hatred rose to downright fury against Boabdil, whom he considered as the cause of his downfal. When tidings were brought him, that Ferdinand was laying waste the vega, he took a sudden resolution: assembling the whole disposable force of his kingdom, which amounted but to two hundred men, he descended from the Alpuxarras, and sought the Christian camp; content to serve as vassal to the enemy of his faith and his nation, so that he might see Granada wrested from the sway of his nephew.

In his blind passion, the old wrathful monarch injured his own cause, and strengthened that of his adversary. The Moors of Granada had been clamorous in his praise, extolling him as a victim to his patriotism, and had refused to believe all reports of his treaty with the Christians; but when they beheld from the walls of the city his banner mingling with the banners of the unbelievers, and arrayed against his late people, and the capital he had commanded, they broke forth into curses and revilings, and heaped all kinds of stigmas upon his name.

Their next emotion was in favour of Boabdil. They gathered under the walls of the Alhambra, and hailed him as their only hope, as the sole dependence of the country. Boabdil could scarcely believe his senses, when he heard his name mingled with praises and greeted with acclamations. Encouraged by this unexpected gleam of popularity, he ventured forth from his retreat, and was received with rapture. All his past errors were attributed to the hardships of his fortune, and the usurpation of his tyrant uncle, and whatever breath the populace could spare from uttering curses on El Zagal was expended in shouts in honour of El Chico.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

For thirty days had the vega been overrun by the Christian forces, and that vast plain, lately so luxuriant and beautiful, was become a wide scene of desolation. The destroying army having accomplished its task, passed over the bridge of Pinos, and wound up into the mountains, on the way to Cordova; bearing away the spoils of towns and villages, and driving off flocks and herds, in long dusty columns. The sound of the last Christian trumpet died away along the side of the moun-

tain of Elvira, and not a hostile squadron was seen glistening in the mournful fields of the vega.

The eyes of Boabdil el Chico were at length opened to the real policy of King Ferdinand; and he saw, that he had no longer anything to depend upon, than the valour of his arm. No time was to be lost, in hastening to counteract the effect of the late Christian ravage, and in opening the channel for distant supplies to Granada.

Scarcely had the retiring squadron of Ferdinand disappeared among the mountains, than Boabdil buckled on his armour, sallied forth from the Alhambra, and prepared to take the field. When the populace behend him actually in arms against his late ally, both parties thronged with zeal to his standard. The hardy inhabitants also of the Sierra Nevada, or chain of snow-capped mountains, which rise above Granada, descended from their heights, and hastened into the city gates, to proffer their devotion to their youthful king. The great square of the vivarrambla shone with the proud array of legions of cavalry, decked with the colours and devices of the most ancient Moorish families, and marshalled forth by the patriot Muza to follow the king to battle.

It was on the 15th of June that Boabdil once more issued out from the gates of Granada on a martial enterprise. A few leagues from the city, within full view of it, and at the entrance of the Alpuxarra mountains, stood the powerful castle of Alhendin. It was built on an eminence, rising from the midst of a small town, and commanding a great part of the vega, and the main road to the rich valleys of the Alpuxarras. The castle was commanded by a valiant Christian cavalier, named Mendo de Quexada, and garrisoned by two hundred and fifty men, all seasoned and experienced warriors. It was a continual thorn in the side of Granada. The labourers of the vega were swept from their fields by its hardy soldiers, convoys were cut off on the passes of the mountains; and, as the garrison commanded a full view of the gates of the city, no band of merchants could venture forth on their needful journeys, without being swooped up by the war hawks of Alhendin.

It was against this important fortress that Boabdil first led his troops. For six days and nights the fortress was closely besieged. The alcayde and his veteran garrison defended themselves valiantly; but they were exhausted by fatigue and

constant watchfulness; for the Moors, being continually relieved by fresh troops from Granada, kept up an unremitted and vigorous attack. Twice the barbican was forced, and twice the assailants were driven forth headlong with excessive loss. The garrison, however, was diminished in number by the killed and wounded: there were no longer soldiers sufficient to man the walls and gateway. The brave alcayde was compelled to retire, with his surviving force, to the keep of the castle, in which he continued to make a desperate resistance.

The Moors now approached the foot of the tower, under shelter of wooden skreens, covered with wet hides, to ward off missiles and combustibles. They went to work vigorously to undermine the tower, placing props of wood under the foundations, to be afterwards set on fire, so as to give the besiegers time to escape before the edifice should fall. Some of the Moors plied their crossbows and arquebuses to defend the workmen, and to drive the Christians from the wall, while the latter showered down stones and darts, and melted pitch, and flaming combustibles, on the miners.

The brave Mendo de Quexada had cast many an anxious eye across the vega, in hopes of seeing some Christian force hastening to his assistance. Not a gleam of spear or helm was to be descried; for no one had dreamed of this sudden irruption of the Moors. The alcayde saw his bravest men dead or wounded around him, while the remainder were sinking with watchfulness and fatigue. In defiance of all opposition, the Moors had accomplished their mine; the fire was brought before the walls, that was to be applied to the stanchions, in case the garrison persisted in defence; and in a little while the tower would crumble beneath him, and be rent and hurled in ruins to the plain. At the very last moment, and not till then, the brave alcayde made the signal of surrender. He marched forth with the remnant of his veteran garrison, who were all made prisoners. Immediately Boabdil ordered the walls of the fortress to be razed, and fire to be applied to the stanchions, that the place might never again become a strong-hold to the Christians, and a scourge to Granada.

The alcayde and his fellow captives were passing in dejected convoy across the vega, when they heard a tremendous crash behind them. Turning to look upon their late fortress, they beheld nothing but a heap of tumbling ruins, and

a vast column of smoke and dust, where once had stood the lofty tower of Alhendin.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

BOABDIL EL CHICO followed up his success by capturing the two fortresses of Marchena and Bulduy; he sent his alfaquis in every direction to proclaim a holy war, and to summon all true Moslems, of town or castle, mountain or valley, to saddle steed, and buckle on armour, and hasten to the standard of the faith. The tidings spread far and wide, that Boabdil el Chico was once more in the field, and victorious. The Moors of various places, dazzled by this gleam of success, hastened to throw off their sworn allegiance to the Castilian crown, and to elevate the standard of Boabdil; and the youthful monarch flattered himself, that the whole kingdom was on the point of returning to its allegiance.

The fiery cavaliers of Granada were eager to renew those forays into the Christian lands, in which they had formerly delighted. A number of them therefore concerted an irruption to the north into the territory of Jaen, to harass the country about Quezada. They had heard of a rich convoy of merchants and wealthy travellers on the way to the city of Baeza; and they anticipated a glorious conclusion to their foray in capturing this convoy.

Assembling a number of horsemen, lightly armed, and fleetly mounted, and one hundred foot soldiers, these hardy cavaliers issued forth by night from Granada, made their way in silence through the defiles of the mountains, crossed the frontier without opposition, and suddenly appeared, as if fallen from the clouds, in the very heart of the Christian country.

The mountainous frontier, which separates Granada from Jaen, was at this time under the Count de Tendilla, the same veteran who had distinguished himself by his vigilance and sagacity, when commanding the fortress of Alhama. He held his head quarters at the city of Alcala la Real, in its impregnable fortress, perched high among the mountains, about six leagues from Granada, and predominating over all the frontier. From this cloud-capt hold among the rocks, he kept an eagle eye upon Granada, and had his scouts and spies in all directions; so that a crow could not fly over the border without his knowledge.

His fortress was a place of refuge for the Christian captives,

who escaped by night from the Moorish dungeons of Granada. Often, however, they missed their way in the defiles of the mountains; and, wandering about bewildered, either repaired by mistake to some Moorish town, or were discovered and retaken at daylight by the enemy. To prevent these accidents, the count had a tower built at his own expense, on the top of one of the heights near Alcala, which commanded a view of the vega, and the country around. Here he kept a light blazing throughout the night, as a beacon for all Christian fugitives, to guide them to a place of safety.

The count was aroused one night from his repose by shouts and cries, which came up from the town, and approached the castle walls. "To arms! to arms! the Moor is over the border!" was the cry. A Christian soldier, pale and emaciated, and who still bore traces of the Moorish chains, was brought before the count. He had been taken as guide by the Moorish cavaliers, who had sallied from Granada, but had escaped from them among the mountains; and, after much wandering, had found his way to Alcala by the signal fire.

Notwithstanding the bustle and agitation of the moment, the Count de Tendilla listened calmly and attentively to the account of the fugitive, and questioned him minutely as to the time of departure of the Moors, and the direction and rapidity of their march. He saw that it was too late to prevent their incursion and ravage, but he determined to await them, and give them a warm reception on their return. His soldiers were always on the alert, and ready to take the field at a moment's warning. Choosing one hundred and fifty lancers, hardy and valiant men, well disciplined, and well seasoned, as indeed, were all his troops, he issued forth quietly before break of day, and, descending through the defiles of the mountains, stationed his little force in ambush in a deep barranca, or dry channel of a torrent, near Barzina, three leagues only from Granada, on the road by which the marauders would have to return. In the meantime he sent scouts to post themselves upon different heights, and look out for the approach of the enemy.

All day they remained concealed in the ravine, and for a great part of the following night; not a turban, however, was to be seen, excepting now and then a peasant returing from his labour, or a solitary muleteer hastening towards Granada. The cavaliers of the count began to grow restless and

impatient; they feared that the enemy might have taken some other route, or might have received intelligence of their ambuscade; and they urged him to abandon the enterprise, and return to Alcala. "We are here," said they, "almost at the gates of the Moorish capital; our movements may have been descried, and, before we are aware, Granada may pour forth its legions of swift cavalry, and crush us with an overwhelming force." The Count de Tendilla, however, persisted in remaining until his scouts should come in. About two hours before daybreak there were signal fires on certain Moorish watchtowers of the mountains. While they were regarding these with anxiety, the scouts came hurrying into the ravine. "The Moors are approaching," said they; "we have reconnoitred them near at hand. They are between one and two hundred strong, but encumbered with many prisoners and much booty." The Christian cavaliers laid their ears to the ground, and heard the distant tramp of horses, and the tread of foot soldiers. They mounted their horses, braced their shields, couched their lances, and drew near to the entrance of the ravine where it opened upon the road.

The Moors had succeeded in waylaying and surprising the Christian convoy on its way to Baeza. They had captured a great number of prisoners, male and female, with great store of gold and jewels, and sumpter mules laden with rich merchandise. With these they had made a forced march over the dangerous parts of the mountains, but now, being so near to Granada, they fancied themselves in perfect security. They loitered along the road, therefore, irregularly and slowly, some singing, others laughing and exulting at having eluded the boasted vigilance of the Count de Tendilla; while ever and anon was heard the plaint of some female captive bewailing the jeopardy of her honour, and the heavy sighing of the merchant at beholding his property in the grasp of ruthless spoilers.

The Count de Tendilla waited until some of the escort had passed the ravine; then, giving the signal for assault, his cavaliers set up loud shouts and cries, and charged furiously into the centre of the foe. The obscurity of the place and the hour added to the terrors of the surprise. The Moors were thrown into confusion. Some rallied, fought desperately, and fell covered with wounds. Thirty-six were killed, and fifty-five were made prisoners; the rest, under cover of

the darkness, made their escape to the rocks and defiles of the mountains. The good count unbound the prisoners, gladdening the hearts of the merchants by restoring to them their merchandise; the female captives, also, regained the jewels of which they had been despoiled, excepting such as had been lost beyond recovery. Forty-five saddle horses of the choice Barbary breed remained, as captured spoils of the Moors, together with costly armour and booty of various kinds. Having collected everything in haste, and arranged his cavalgada, the count urged his way with all speed for Alcala la Real, lest he should be pursued and overtaken by the Moors of Granada. As he wound up the steep ascent to his mountain city, the inhabitants poured forth to meet him with shouts of joy. This triumph was doubly enhanced by being received at the gates of the city by his wife, the daughter of the Marquis of Villena, a lady of distinguished merit, whom he had not seen for two years, that he had been separated from his home by the arduous duties of these iron wars.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

King Boabdil found that his diminished territory was too closely overlooked by Christian fortresses, like Alcala la Real, and too strictly watched by vigilant alcaydes, like the Count of Tendilla, to be able to maintain itself by internal resources. His foraging expeditions were liable to be intercepted and defeated; while the ravage of the vega had swept off everything on which the city depended for future sustenance. He felt the want of a seaport, through which, as formerly, he might keep open a communication with Africa, and obtain reinforcements and supplies from beyond the seas. All the ports and harbours were in the hands of the Christians, and Granada and its remnant of dependent territory were completely landlocked.

In this emergency, the attention of Boabdil was called by circumstances to the seaport of Salobreña. This redoubtable town has already been mentioned in this chronicle as a place deemed impregnable by the Moors; insomuch that their kings were accustomed, in time of peril, to keep their treasures in its citadel. It was situate on a high rocky hill, dividing one of those rich little vegas, or plains, which lie open to the Mediterranean, but run, like deep green

bays, into the stern bosoms of the mountains. The vega was covered with beautiful vegetation; with rice and cotton, with groves of oranges, citrons, figs, and mulberries, and with gardens enclosed by hedges of reeds, of aloes, and the Indian fig. Running streams of cool water, from the springs and snows of the Sierra Nevada, kept this delightful valley continually fresh and verdant; while it was almost locked up by mountain barriers and lofty promontories that stretched far into the sea.

Through the centre of this rich vega the rock of Salobreña reared its rugged back, nearly dividing the plain, and advancing to the margin of the sea, with just a strip of sandy beach at its foot, laved by the blue waves of the Mediterranean.

The town covered the ridge and sides of the rocky hill, and was fortified by strong walls and towers, while on the highest and most precipitous part stood the citadel, a huge castle that seemed to form a part of the living rock, the massive ruins of which, at the present day, attract the gaze of the traveller, as he winds his way far below along the road which passes through the vega.

This important fortress had been intrusted to the command of Don Francisco Ramirez de Madrid, captain general of the artillery, and the most scientific of all the Spanish leaders. That experienced veteran, however, was with the king at Cordova, having left a valiant cavalier as alcayde of the place.

Boabdil el Chico had full information of the state of the garrison and the absence of its commander. Putting himself at the head of a powerful force, therefore, he departed from Granada, and made a rapid march through the mountains, hoping, by this sudden movement, to seize upon Salobreña before King Ferdinand could come to its assistance.

The inhabitants of Salobreña were Mudexares, or Moors, who had sworn allegiance to the Christians. Still, when they heard the sound of the Moorish drums and trumpets, and beheld the squadrons of their countrymen advancing across the vega, their hearts yearned towards the standard of their nation and their faith. A tumult arose in the place. The populace shouted the name of Boabdil el Chico, and, throwing open the gates, admitted him within the walls.

The Christian garrison was too few in number to contend for the possession of the town. They retreated to the citadel

and shut themselves up within its massive walls, which were considered impregnable. Here they maintained a desperate defence, hoping to hold out until succour should arrive from the neighbouring fortresses.

The tidings that Salobreña was invested by the Moorish king, spread along the sea coast, and filled the Christians with alarm. Don Francisco Enriques, uncle of the king, commanded the city of Velez Malaga, about twelve leagues distant; but separated by ranges of those vast rocky mountains which are piled along the Mediterranean, and tower in steep promontories and precipices above its waves.

Don Francisco summoned the alcaydes of his district to hasten with him to the relief of this important fortress. A number of cavaliers and their retainers answered to his call, among whom was Fernando Perez del Pulgar, surnamed El de las Hazañas, (he of the exploits) the same who had signalized himself in a foray by elevating a handkerchief on a lance for a banner, and leading on his disheartened comrades to victory. As soon as Don Francisco beheld a little band collected round him, he set out with all speed for Salobreña. The march was rugged and severe; climbing and descending immense mountains, and sometimes winding along the edge of giddy precipices, with the surges of the sea raging far below. When Don Francisco arrived with his followers at the lofty promontory that stretches along one side of the little vega of Salobreña, he looked down with sorrow and anxiety upon a Moorish army of great force encamped at the foot of the fortress; while Moorish banners on various parts of the wall showed that the town was already in possession of the infidels. A solitary Christian standard alone floated on the top of the castle keep, indicating that the brave garrison were hemmed up in their rock-built citadel.

Don Francisco found it impossible, with his small force, to make any impression on the camp of the Moors, or to get to the relief of the castle. He stationed his little band upon a rocky height near the sea, where they were safe from the assaults of the enemy. The sight of his friendly banner waving in their neighbourhood cheered the heart of the garrison, and he conveyed to them assurance of speedy succour from the king. In the meantime, Fernando Perez del Pulgar, who always burned to distinguish himself by bold and striking exploits, in the course of a prowling expedition along the borders of the Moorish camp, remarked a postern

gate of the castle opening upon the steep part of the rocky hill, which looked towards the mountains. A sudden thought flashed upon the daring mind of Pulgar. "Who will follow my banner," said he, "and make a dash for yonder postern?" A bold proposition, in time of warfare, never wants for bold spirits to accept it. Seventy resolute men immediately stepped forward. Pulgar put himself at their head. They cut their way suddenly through a weak part of the camp, fought up to the gate, which was eagerly thrown open to receive them, and succeeded in effecting their entrance into the fortress before the alarm of their attempt had spread through the Moorish army.

The garrison was roused to new spirit by this unlooked-for reinforcement, and were enabled to make a more vigorous resistance. The Moors had intelligence, however, that there was a great scarcity of water in the castle; and they exulted in the idea that this additional number of warriors would soon exhaust the cisterns, and compel them to surrender. When Pulgar heard of this hope entertained by the enemy, he caused a bucket of water to be lowered from the battlements, and threw a silver cup in bravado to the Moors.

The situation of the garrison, however, was daily growing more and more critical. They suffered greatly from thirst; while, to tantalize them in their sufferings, they beheld limpid streams winding in abundance through the green plain below them. They began to fear that all succour would arrive too late, when one day they beheld a little squadron of vessels far at sea, but standing towards the shore. There was some doubt at first whether it might not be a hostile armament from Africa; but, as it approached, they descried, to their great joy, the banner of Castile.

It was a reinforcement, brought in all haste by the governor of the fortress, Don Francisco Ramirez. The squadron anchored at a steep rocky island, which rises from the very margin of the smooth sandy beach, directly in front of the rock of Salobreña, and stretches out into the sea. On this island Ramirez landed his men, and was as strongly posted as if in a fortress. His force was too scanty to attempt a battle; but he assisted to harass and distract the besiegers. Whenever king Boabdil made an attack upon the fortress, his camp was assailed, on one side by the troops of Ramirez, who landed from their island, and, on another, by those of Don Francisco Enriquez, who swept down from their rock; while

Fernando del Pulgar kept up a fierce defence from every tower and battlement of the castle. The attention of the Moorish king was diverted, also, for a time, by an ineffectual attempt to relieve the little port of Adra, that had recently declared in his favour, but had been recaptured for the Christians by Cidi Yahye and his son Alnayer. Thus the unlucky Boabdil, bewildered on every hand, lost all the advantage that he had gained by his rapid march from Granada. While he was yet besieging the obstinate citadel, tidings were brought him, that King Ferdinand was in full march, with a powerful host, to its assistance. There was no time for further delay. He made a furious attack, with all his forces, upon the castle, but was again repulsed by Pulgar and his coadjutors; when, abandoning the siege in despair, he retreated with his army, lest King Ferdinand should get between him and his capital. On his way back to Granada, however, he in some sort consoled himself for his late disappointment, by overrunning a part of the territories and possessions lately assigned to his uncle El Zagal, and to Cidi Yahye. He defeated their alcaydes, destroyed several of their fortresses, burnt their villages; and, leaving the country behind him, reeking and smoking with his vengeance, returned, with considerable booty, to repose himself within the walls of the Alhambra.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

SCARCELY had Boabdil ensconced himself in his capital, when King Ferdinand, at the head of seven thousand horse, and twenty thousand foot, again appeared in the vega. He had set out in all haste from Cordova, to the relief of Salobreña; but hearing on his march, that the siege was raised, he turned with his army, to make a second ravage round the walls of devoted Granada. His present forage lasted fifteen days, in the course of which, everything that had escaped his former desolating visit was so completely destroyed, that scarcely a green thing, or a living animal, was left on the face of the land. The Moors sallied frequently, and fought desperately in defence of their fields; but the work of destruction was accomplished, and Granada, once the queen of gardens, was left surrounded by a desert.

From hence Ferdinand marched to crush a conspiracy, which had lately manifested itself in the cities of Guadix, Baza and Almeria. These recently conquered places had

entered into secret correspondence with King Boabdil, inviting him to march to their gates, promising to rise upon the Christian garrisons, seize upon the citadels, and surrender themselves into his power. The Marquis of Villena had received notice of the conspiracy, and suddenly thrown himself, with a large force, into Gaudix. Under pretence of making a review of the inhabitants, he made them sally forth into the fields before the city. When the whole Moorish population, capable of bearing arms, was thus without the walls, he ordered the gates to be closed. He then permitted them to enter two by two, and three by three, and to take forth their wives and children, and effects. The houseless Moors were fain to make themselves temporary hovels, in the gardens and orchards about the city. They were clamorous in their complaints at being thus excluded from their homes; but were told, they must wait with patience, until the charges against them could be investigated, and the pleasure of the king be known.*

When Ferdinand arrived at Guadix, he found the unhappy Moors in their cabins, among the orchards. They complained bitterly of the deception that had been practised upon them, and implored permission to return into the city, and live peaceably in their dwellings, as had been promised them in their articles of capitulation.

King Ferdinand listened graciously to their complaints. "My friends," said he, in reply, "I am informed, that there has been a conspiracy among you, to kill my alcayde and garrison, and to take part with my enemy, the King of Granada. I shall make a thorough investigation of this conspiracy. Those among you, who shall be proved innocent, shall be restored to their dwellings: but the guilty shall incur the penalty of their offences. As I wish, however, to proceed with mercy as well as justice, I now give you your choice, either to depart at once, without further question, going wherever you please, and taking with you your families and effects, under an assurance of safety, or to deliver up those who are guilty; not one of whom, I give you my word, shall escape punishment."

When the people of Guadix heard this, they communed among themselves, "and, as most of them," says the worthy Agapida, "were either culpable, or feared to be considered so, they accepted the alternative, and departed sorrowfully, they,

* Zurita, lib. xx. cap. 85. Cura de los Palacios, cap. 97.

and their wives, and their little ones." "Thus," in the words of that excellent and contemporary historian, Andres Bernaldes, commonly called the Curate of Los Palacios, "thus did the king deliver Guadix from the hands of the enemies of our holy faith, after seven hundred and seventy years, that it had been in their possession, even since the time of Roderick the Goth; and this was one of the mysteries of our Lord, who would not consent that the city should remain longer in power of the Moors." A pious and sage remark, which is quoted with peculiar approbation by the worthy Agapida.

King Ferdinand offered similar alternatives to the Moors of Baza, Almeria, and other cities, accused of participation in this conspiracy; who generally preferred to abandon their homes, rather than incur the risk of an investigation. Most of them relinquished Spain, as a country where they could no longer live in security and independence, and departed with their families for Africa; such as remained were suffered to live in villages and hamlets and other unwalled places.*

While Ferdinand was thus occupied at Gaudix, dispensing justice and mercy, and receiving cities in exchange, the old monarch, Muley Abdallah, surnamed El Zagal, appeared before him. He was haggard with care, and almost crazed with passion. He had found his little territory of Andarax, and his two thousand subjects, as difficult to govern as had been the distracted kingdom of Granada. The charm, which had bound the Moors to him, was broken, when he appeared in arms under the banner of Ferdinand. He had returned from his inglorious campaign, with his petty army of two hundred men, followed by the execrations of the people of Granada, and the secret repining of those he had led into the field. No sooner had his subjects heard of the successes of Boabdil el Chico, than they seized their arms, assembled tumultuously, declared for the young monarch, threatening the life of El Zagal.† The unfortunate old king had with difficulty evaded their fury; and this last lesson seemed entirely to have cured him of his passion for sovereignty. He now entreated Ferdinand to purchase the towns and castles, and other possessions, which had been granted to him; offering them at a low rate, and begging safe passage, for himself and his followers, to Africa. King Ferdinand graciously complied with his wishes. He purchased

* Garibay, lib. xiii. cap. 49. Pulgar, lib. iii. cap. 132.

† Cura de los Palacios, cap. 97.

of him three and twenty towns and villages, in the valleys of Andarax and Alhauren, for which he gave him five millions of maravedis. El Zagal relinquished his right to one half of the salinas, or saltpits, of Maleha, in favour of his brother-in-law, Cidi Yahye. Having thus disposed of his petty empire and possessions, he packed up all his treasure, of which he had a great amount, and, followed by many Moorish families, passed over to Africa.*

And here let us cast an eye beyond the present period of our chronicle, and trace the remaining career of El Zagal. His short and turbulent reign, and disastrous end, would afford a wholesome lesson to unprincipled ambition, were not all ambition of the kind fated to be blind to precept and example. When he arrived in Africa, instead of meeting with kindness and sympathy, he was seized and thrown in prison by the King of Fez, as though he had been his vassal. He was accused of being the cause of the dissensions and downfal of the kingdom of Granada, and the accusation being proved to the satisfaction of the King of Fez, he condemned the unhappy El Zagal to perpetual darkness. A basin of glowing copper was passed before his eyes, which effectually destroyed his sight. His wealth, which had probably been the secret cause of these cruel measures, was confiscated and seized upon by his oppressor, and El Zagal was thrust forth, blind, helpless, and destitute, upon the world. In this wretched condition, the late Moorish monarch groped his way through the regions of Tingitania, until he reached the city of Velez de Gomera. The King of Velez had formerly been his ally, and felt some movement of compassion at his present altered and abject state. He gave him food and raiment, and suffered him to remain unmolested in his dominions. Death, which so often hurries off the prosperous and happy from the midst of untasted pleasures, spares, on the other hand, the miserable, to drain the last drop of his cup of bitterness. El Zagal dragged out a wretched existence of many years, in the city of Velez. He wandered about, blind and disconsolate, an object of mingled scorn and pity, and bearing above his raiment a parchment, on which was written in Arabic, "This is the unfortunate King of Andalusia." †

* Conde, part iv. cap. 41.

† Marmol de Robelione Maur. lib. i. cap. 16. Pedraza Hist. Granat. p. iii. cap. 4. Suarez, Hist. de Obispados de Guadiz y Baza, cap. 10.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

"How is thy strength departed, oh Granada! how is thy beauty withered and despoiled, oh city of groves and fountains! The commerce, that once thronged thy streets, is at an end; the merchant no longer hastens to thy gates, with the luxuries of foreign lands. The cities, which once paid thee tribute, are wrested from thy sway; the chivalry, which filled thy vivarrambla with the sumptuous pageantry of war, have fallen in many battles. The Alhambra still rears its ruddy towers from the midst of groves; but melancholy reigns in its marble halls, and the monarch looks down form his lofty balconies upon a naked waste, where once had extended the blooming glories of the vega!"

Such is the lament of the Moorish writers, over the lamentable state of Granada, which remained a mere phantom of its former greatness. The two ravages of the vega, following so closely upon each other, had swept off all the produce of the year, and the husbandman had no longer the heart to till the field, seeing that the ripening harvest only brought the spoiler to his door.

During the winter season, King Ferdinand made diligent preparations for the last campaign, that was to decide the fate of Granada. As this war was waged purely for the promotion of the Christian faith, he thought it meet its enemies should bear the expenses. He levied, therefore, a general contribution upon all the Jews throughout his kingdom, by synagogues and districts, and obliged them to render in the proceeds at the city of Seville.*

On the 11th of April, Ferdinand and Isabella departed for the Moorish frontier, with the solemn determination to lay close siege to Granada, and never to quit its walls until they had planted the standard of the faith on the towers of the Alhambra. Many of the nobles of the kingdom, particularly those from the parts remote from the scene of action, wearied by the toils of war, and foreseeing, that this would be a tedious siege, requiring patience and vigilance, rather than hardy deeds of arms, were contented with sending their vassals, while they staid at home themselves, to attend to their domains. Many cities furnish ed soldiers at their cost, and the king took the field with an army of forty thousand

* Garibay, lib. viii. cap. 39.

infantry, and ten thousand horse. The principal captains, who followed him in this campaign, were Roderigo Ponce de Leon, the Marquis of Cadiz, the master of Santiago, the Marquis of Villena, the counts of Tendilla, Cifuentes, Cabra, and Ureña, and Don Alonzo de Aguilar.

Queen Isabella, accompanied by her son, the Prince Juan, and by the princesses Juana, Maria, and Cathalina, her daughters, proceeded to Alcala la Real, the mountain fortress and strong-hold of the Count de Tendilla. Here she remained, to forward supplies to the army, and to be ready to repair to the camp, whenever her presence might be required.

The army of Ferdinand poured into the vega, by various defiles of the mountains, and on the 23rd of April, the royal tent was pitched at a village called Los Ojos de Huescar, about a league and a half from Granada. At the approach of this formidable force, the harassed inhabitants turned pale, and even many of the warriors trembled, for they felt, that the last desperate struggle was at hand.

Boabdil el Chico assembled his council in the Alhambra, from the windows of which they could behold the Christian squadrons, glistening through clouds of dust, as they poured along the vega. The utmost confusion and consternation reigned in the council. Many of the members, terrified with the horrors impending over their families, advised Boabdil to throw himself upon the generosity of the Christian monarch; even several of the bravest suggested the possibility of obtaining honourable terms.

The wazir of the city, Abul Casim Abdelmelic, was called upon to report the state of the public means, for sustenance and defence. There were sufficient provisions, he said, for a few months' supply, independent of what might exist in the possession of merchants, and other rich inhabitants. "But of what avail," said he, "is a temporary provision against the sieges of the Castilian monarch, which are interminable?"

He produced, also, the lists of men capable of bearing arms. "The number," said he, "is great; but what can be expected from mere citizen soldiers? They vaunt and menace in time of safety. None are so arrogant when the enemy is at a distance; but when the din of war thunders at their gates, they hide themselves in terror."

When Muza heard these words, he rose with generous wrath. "What reason have we," said he, "to despair?

The blood of those illustrious Moors, the ancient conquerors of Spain, still flows in our veins. Let us be true to ourselves, and fortune will again be with us. We have a veteran force, both horse and foot, the flower of our chivalry; seasoned in war, and scarred in a thousand battles. As to the multitude of our citizens, spoken of so slightly, why should we doubt their valour? There are twenty thousand young men, in the fire of youth, for whom I will engage, that, in the defence of their homes, they will rival the most hardy veterans. Do we want provisions? Our horses are fleet, and our horsemen daring in foray. Let them scour and scourge the country of those apostate Moslems, who have surrendered to the Christians. Let them make inroads into the lands of our enemies. We shall soon see them returning with cavalgadas to our gates; and to a soldier, there is no morsel so sweet as that wrested with hard fighting from the foe."

Boabdil el Chico, though he wanted firm and durable courage, was readily excited to sudden emotions of bravery. He caught a glow of resolution from the noble ardour of Muza. "Do what is needful," said he to his commanders: "into your hands I confide the common safety. You are the protectors of the kingdom; and, with the aid of Allah, will revenge the insults of our religion, the deaths of our friends and relations, and the sorrows and sufferings heaped upon our land."*

To every one was now assigned his separate duty. The wazir had charge of the arms and provisions, and the enrolling of the people. Muza was to command the cavalry, to defend the gates, and to take the lead in all sallies and skirmishes. Naim Reduan and Mohammed Aben Zayda were his adjutants; Abdel Kerim Zegri, and the other captains, were to guard the walls; and the alcaydes of the alcazaba, and of the red towers, had command of the fortresses.

Nothing now was heard but the din of arms, and the bustle of preparation. The Moorish spirit, quick to catch fire, was immediately in a flame; and the populace, in the excitement of the moment, set at naught the power of the Christians. Muza was in all parts of the city, infusing his own generous zeal into the bosoms of the soldiery. The young cavaliers rallied round him as their model; the veteran warriors re-

* Conde.

garded him with a soldier's admiration: the vulgar throng followed him with shouts; and the helpless part of the inhabitants, the old men and the women, hailed him with blessings as their protector.

On the first appearance of the Christian army, the principal gates of the city had been closed, and secured with bars, and bolts, and heavy chains. Muza now ordered them to be thrown open. "To me and my cavaliers," said he, "is intrusted the defence of the gates: our bodies shall be their barriers." He stationed at each gate a strong guard, chosen from his bravest men. His horsemen were always completely armed, and ready to mount at a moment's warning. Their steeds stood saddled and caparisoned in the stables, with lance and buckler beside them. On the least approach of the enemy, a squadron of horse gathered within the gate, ready to dart forth like the bolt from the thunder cloud. Muza made no empty bravado, or haughty threat: he was more terrible in deeds than in words: and executed daring exploits, beyond even the vaunt of the vainglorious. Such was the present champion of the Moors. Had they possessed many such warriors, or had Muza risen to power at an earlier period of the war, the fate of Granada might have been deferred, and the Moor, for a long time, have maintained his throne within the walls of the Alhambra.

CHAPTER XC.

THOUGH Granada was shorn of its glories, and nearly cut off from all external aid, still its mighty castles and massive bulwarks seemed to set all attack at defiance. Being the last retreat of Moorish power, it had assembled within its walls the remnants of the armies that had contended, step by step, with the invaders, in their gradual conquest of the land. All that remained of high born and high bred chivalry was here. All that was loyal and patriotic was roused to activity by the common danger; and Granada that had so long been lulled into inaction by vain hopes of security, now assumed a formidable aspect in the hour of its despair.

Ferdinand saw, that any attempt to subdue the city by main force would be perilous and bloody. Cautious in his policy, and fond of conquests gained by art rather than by valour, he

resorted to the plan, which had been so successful with Baza, and determined to reduce the place by famine. For this purpose, his armies penetrated into the very heart of the Alpuxarras; and ravaged the valleys, and sacked and burned the towns upon which the city depended for its supplies. Scouting parties, also, ranged the mountains behind Granada, and captured every casual convoy of provisions. The Moors became more daring as their situation became more hopeless. Never had Ferdinand experienced such vigorous sallies and assaults. Muza, at the head of his cavalry, harrassed the borders of the camp, and even penetrated into the interior, making sudden spoil and ravage, and leaving his course to be traced by the wounded and slain. To protect his camp from these assaults, Ferdinand fortified it with deep trenches and strong bulwarks. It was of a quadrangular form, divided into streets, like a city, the troops being quartered in tents, and in booths, constructed of bushes and branches of trees. When it was completed, Queen Isabella came in state, with all her court, and the prince and princesses, to be present at the siege. This was intended, as on former occasions, to reduce the besieged to despair, by showing the determination of the sovereigns to reside in the camp until the city should surrender. Immediately after her arrival, the queen rode forth, to survey the camp and its environs. Wherever she went, she was attended by a splendid retinue; and all the commanders vied with each other in the pomp and ceremony with which they received her. Nothing was heard from morning until night but shouts and acclamations, and bursts of martial music; so that it appeared to the Moors as if a continual festival and triumph reigned in the Christian camp.

The arrival of the queen, however, and the menaced obstinacy of the siege, had no effect in damping the fire of the Moorish chivalry. Muza inspired the youthful warriors with the most devoted heroism. "We have nothing left to fight for," said he, "but the ground we stand on: when this is lost, we cease to have a country and a name."

Finding the Christian king forebore to make an attack, Muza incited his cavaliers to challenge the youthful chivalry of the Christian army to single combat, or partial skirmishes. Scarcely a day passed without gallant conflicts of the kind, in sight of the city and the camp. The combatants rivalled each other in the splendour of their armour and array, as well as

in the prowess of their deeds. Their contests were more like the stately ceremonials of tilts and tournaments, than the rude combats of the field. Ferdinand soon perceived that they animated the fiery Moors with fresh zeal and courage, while they cost the lives of many of his bravest cavaliers: he again, therefore, forbade the acceptance of any individual challenges; and ordered that all partial encounters should be avoided. The cool and stern policy of the Catholic sovereign bore hard upon the generous spirits of either army; but roused the indignation of the Moors, when they found they were to be subdued in this inglorious manner. "Of what avail," said they, "is chivalry and heroic valour? the crafty monarch of the Christians has no magnanimity in warfare: he seeks to subdue us through the weakness of our bodies, but shuns to encounter the courage of our souls!"

CHAPTER XCI.

WHEN the Moorish knights beheld, that all courteous challenges were unavailing, they sought various means to provoke the Christian warriors to the field. Sometimes a body of them, fleetly mounted, would gallop up to the skirts of the camp, and try who should hurl his lance farthest within the barriers; leaving his name inscribed on it, or a label affixed to it, containing some taunting defiance. These bravadoes caused great irritation; but still the Spanish warriors were restrained by the prohibition of the king.

Among the Moorish cavaliers was one named Tarfe, renowned for his great strength and daring spirit; but whose courage partook of fierce audacity rather than chivalric heroism. In one of these sallies, when they were skirting the Christian camp, this arrogant Moor outstripped his companions, overleaped the barriers, and galloping close to the royal quarters, lanched his lance so far within, that it remained quivering in the earth, close by the pavilions of the sovereigns. The royal guards rushed forth in pursuit; but the Moorish horsemen were already beyond the camp, and scouring in a cloud of dust for the city. Upon wresting the lance from the earth, a label was found upon it, importing that it was intended for the queen.

Nothing could equal the indignation of the Christian warriors at the insolence of the bravado, when they heard to

whom the discourteous insult was offered. Fernando Perez del Pulgar, surnamed "he of the exploits," was present, and resolved not to be outbraved by his daring infidel. "Who will stand by me," said he, "in an enterprise of desperate peril?" The Christian cavaliers well knew the harebrained valour of del Pulgar; yet not one hesitated to step forward. He chose fifteen companions, all men of powerful arm and dauntless heart. In the dead of the night he led them forth from the camp, and approached the city cautiously until he arrived at a postern gate, which opened upon the Darro, and was guarded by foot soldiers. The guards, little thinking of such an unwonted and partial attack, were for the most part asleep. The gate was forced, and a confused and chance-medley skirmish ensued. Fernando del Pulgar stopped not to take part in the affray. Putting spurs to his horse, he galloped furiously through the streets, striking fire out of the stones at every bound. Arrived at the principal mosque, he sprang from his horse, and, kneeling at the portal, took possession of the edifice as a Christian chapel, dedicating it to the blessed Virgin. In testimony of the ceremony, he took a tablet, which he had brought with him, on which was inscribed in large letters, "Ave Maria," and nailed it to the door of the mosque with his dagger. This done, he remounted his steed, and galloped back to the gate; the alarm had been given; the city was in an uproar; soldiers were gathering from every direction; they were astonished at seeing a Christian warrior speeding from the interior of the city. Fernando del Pulgar, overturning some, and cutting down others, rejoined his companions, who still maintained possession of the gate by dint of hard fighting, and they all made good their retreat to the camp. The Moors were at a loss to conjecture the meaning of this wild and apparently fruitless assault; but great was their exasperation, when on the following day they discovered the trophy of hardihood and prowess, the Ave Maria, thus elevated in the very centre of the city. The mosque, thus boldly sanctified by Fernando del Pulgar, was eventually, after the capture of Granada, converted into a cathedral.*

* In commemoration of this daring feat, the Emperor Charles V., in after years, conferred on Pulgar and his descendants the right of sepulture in that church, and the privileges of sitting in the choir during high mass. This Fernando Perez del Pulgar was a man of letters, as well as arms; and inscribed to Charles V. a summary of the achieve-

CHAPTER XCII.

THE royal encampment lay at such a distance from Granada, that the general aspect of the city only could be seen, as it rose gracefully from the vega, covering the sides of the hills with palaces and towers. Queen Isabella had expressed an earnest desire to behold, nearer at hand, a place, the beauty of which was so renowned throughout the world; and the Marquis of Cadiz, with his accustomed courtesy, prepared a great military escort and guard, to protect his consort and the ladies of the court, while they enjoyed this perilous gratification.

It was on the morning after the event recorded in the preceding chapter, that a magnificent and powerful train issued forth from the Christian camp. The advanced guard was composed of legions of cavalry, heavily armed, that looked like moving masses of polished steel. Then came the king and queen, with the prince and princesses, and the ladies of the court, surrounded by the royal body guard, sumptuously arrayed, composed of the sons of the most illustrious houses of Spain. After these was the rear guard, composed of a powerful force of horse and foot; for the flower of the army sallied forth that day. The Moors gazed with fearful admiration at this glorious pageant, wherein the pomp of the court was mingled with the terrors of the camp. It moved along in a radiant line across the vega, to the melodious thunders of martial music; while banner, and plume, and silken scarf, and rich brocade, gave a gay and gorgeous relief to the grim visage of iron war that lurked beneath.

The army moved towards the hamlet of Zubia, built on the skirts of the mountains, to the left of Granada, and commanding a view of the Alhambra, and the most beautiful quarter of the city. As they approached the hamlet, the Marquis of Villena, the Count Ureña, and Don Alonzo de Aguilar, filed off with their battalions, and were soon seen glittering along the side of the mountain above the village. In the meantime, the Marquis of Cadiz, the Count de Tendilla, the Count de

ments of Gonsalvo of Cordova, surnamed the Great Captain, who had been one of his comrades in arms. He is often confounded with Fernando del Pulgar, historian and secretary to Queen Isabella. See note to Pulgar's Chron. of the Catholic Sovereigns, part iii. cap. 3. Edit. Valencia, 1780.

Cabra, and Don Alonzo Fernandez, senior of Alcandrete and Montemayor, drew up their forces in battle array on the plain below the hamlet, presenting a living barrier of loyal chivalry, between the sovereigns and the city. Thus securely guarded, the royal party alighted, and entering one of the houses of the hamlet, which had been prepared for their reception, enjoyed a full view of the city from its terraced roof. The ladies of the court gazed with delight at the red towers of the Alhambra, rising from amidst shady groves, anticipating the time when the Catholic sovereigns should be enthroned within its walls, and its courts shine with the splendour of Spanish chivalry. "The reverend prelates and holy friars, who always surrounded the queen, looked with serene satisfaction," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "at this modern Babylon; enjoying the triumph that awaited them, when these mosques and minarets should be converted into churches, and goodly priests and bishops should succeed to the infidel alfaquis."

When the Moors beheld the Christians thus drawn forth in full array in the plain, they supposed it was to offer them battle, and they hesitated not to accept it. In a little while, the queen beheld a body of Moorish cavalry pouring into the vega, the riders managing their fleet and fiery steeds with admirable address. They were richly armed, and clothed in the most brilliant colours, and the caparisons of their steeds flamed with gold and embroidery. This was the favourite squadron of Muza, composed of the flower of the youthful cavaliers of Granada: others succeeded; some heavily armed, some *à la geneta*, with lance and buckler, and lastly came the legions of foot soldiers, with arquebuse and crossbow, and spear and cimeter.

When the queen saw the army issuing from the city, she sent to the Marquis of Cadiz, and forbade any attack upon the enemy, or the acceptance of any challenge to a skirmish; for she was loth that her curiosity should cost the life of a single human being.

The marquis promised to obey, though sorely against his will; and it grieved the spirit of the Spanish cavaliers to be obliged to remain with sheathed swords, while bearded by the foe. The Moors could not comprehend the meaning of this inaction of the Christians, after having apparently invited a battle. They sallied several times from their ranks, and

approached near enough to discharge their arrows, hut the Christians were immovable. Many of the Moorish horsemen galloped close to the Christian ranks, brandishing their lances and cimeters, and defying various cavaliers to single combat: but King Ferdinand had rigorously prohibited all duels of the kind, and they dared not trangress his orders under his very eye.

While this grim and reluctant tranquillity prevailed along the Christian line, there rose a mingled shout and sound of laughter, near the gate of the city. A Moorish horseman, armed at all points, issued forth, followed by a rabble, who drew back as he approached the scene of danger. The Moor was more robust and brawny than was common with his countrymen. His visor was closed; he bore a large buckler and ponderous lance; his cimeter was of a Damascus blade, and his richly-ornamented dagger was wrought by an artificer of Fez. He was known by his device to be Tarfe, the most insolent, yet valiant, of the Moslem warriors; the same who had hurled into the royal camp his lance, inscribed to the queen. As he rode slowly along in front of the army; his very steed, prancing with fiery eye and distending nostril, seemed to breathe defiance to the Christians. But what were the feelings of the Spanish cavaliers, when they beheld, tied to the tail of his steed, and dragged in the dust, the very inscription, *Ave Maria*, which Fernando Perez del Pulgar had affixed to the door of the mosque! A burst of horror and indignation broke forth from the army. Fernando del Pulgar was not at hand to maintain his previous achievement, but one of his young companions in arms, Garcilasso de la Vega by name, putting spurs to his horse, galloped to the hamlet of Zubia, threw himself on his knees before the king, and besought permission to accept the defiance of this insolent infidel, and to revenge the insult offered to our blessed Lady. The request was too pious to be refused: Garcilasso remounted his steed; he closed his helmet, graced by four sable plumes; grasped his buckler, of Flemish workmanship, and his lance of matchless temper, and defied the haughty Moor in the midst of his career. A combat took place, in view of the two armies, and of the Castilian court. The Moor was powerful in wielding his weapons, and dexterous in managing his steed. He was of larger frame than Garcilasso, and more completely armed; and the Christians trembled for their

champion. The shock of their encounter was dreadful; their lances were shivered, and sent up splinters in the air. Garcilasso was thrown back in the saddle, and his horse made a wide career before he could recover his position, gather up the reins, and return to the conflict. They now encountered each other with swords. The Moor circled round his opponent as a hawk circles when about to make a swoop; his Arabian steed obeyed his rider with matchless quickness; at every attack of the infidel it seemed as if the Christian knight must sink beneath his flashing cimeter. But if Garcilasso were inferior to him in power, he was superior in agility; many of his blows he parried, others he received on his Flemish buckler, which was proof against the Damascus blade. The blood streamed from numerous wounds, received by either warrior. The Moor, seeing his antagonist exhausted, availed himself of his superior force; and, grappling, endeavoured to wrest him from his saddle. They both fell to earth; the Moor placed his knee on the breast of his victim, and, brandishing his dagger, aimed a blow at his throat. A cry of despair was uttered by the Christian warriors, when suddenly they beheld the Moor rolling lifeless in the dust! Garcilasso had shortened his sword, and, as his adversary raised his arm to strike, had pierced him to the heart. "It was a singular and miraculous victory," says Fray Antônio Agapida; "but the Christian knight was armed by the sacred nature of his cause, and the holy Virgin gave him strength, like another David, to slay this gigantic champion of the Gentiles."

The laws of chivalry were observed throughout the combat; no one interfered on either side. Garcilasso now despoiled his adversary; then, rescuing the holy inscription of "Ave Maria" from its degrading situation, he elevated it on the point of his sword, and bore it off as a signal of triumph, amidst the rapturous shouts of the Christian army.

The sun had now reached the meridian, and the hot blood of the Moors was inflamed by its rays, and by the sight of the defeat of their champion. Muza ordered two pieces of ordnance to open a fire upon the Christians. A confusion was produced in one part of their ranks. Muza called the chiefs of the army:—"Let us waste no more time in empty challenges, let us charge upon the enemy: he who assaults has always an advantage in the combat." So saying, he

rushed forward, followed by a large body of horse and foot, and charged so furiously upon the advance guard of the Christians, that he drove it upon the battalion of the Marquis of Cadiz. The gallant marquis now considered himself absolved from all further obedience to the queen's commands. He gave the signal to attack. "Santiago!" was shouted along the line, and he pressed forward to the encounter, with his battalion of twelve hundred lances. The other cavaliers followed his example, and the battle instantly became general.

When the king and queen beheld the armies thus rushing to the combat, they threw themselves on their knees, and implored the Holy Virgin to protect her faithful warriors. The prince and princess, the ladies of the court, and the prelates and friars who were present, did the same; and the effect of the prayers of these illustrious and saintly persons was immediately apparent. The fierceness with which the Moors had rushed to the attack was suddenly cooled; they were bold and adroit for a skirmish, but unequal to the veteran Spaniards in the open field. A panic seized upon the foot soldiers; they turned, and took to flight. Muza and his cavaliers in vain endeavoured to rally them. Some sought refuge in the mountains; but the greater part fled to the city, in such confusion, that they overturned and trampled upon each other. The Christians pursued them to the very gates. Upwards of two thousand were killed, wounded, or taken prisoners, and the two pieces of ordnance were brought off, as trophies of the victory. Not a Christian lance but was bathed that day in the blood of an infidel.*

Such was the brief but sanguinary action which was known among the Christian warriors by the name of the Queen's Skirmish; for when the Marquis of Cadiz waited upon her majesty to apologise for breaking her commands, he attributed the victory entirely to her presence. The queen, however, insisted that all was owing to her troops being led on by so valiant a commander. Her majesty had not yet recovered from her agitation at beholding so terrible a scene of bloodshed, though certain veterans present pronounced it as gay and gentle a fight as they had ever witnessed.

To commemorate this victory, the queen afterwards erected a monastery in the village of Zubia, dedicated to St. Fran-

* Cura de los Palacios.

cisco, which still exists, and in its garden is a laurel planted by the hands of her majesty.*

CHAPTER XCIII.

THE ravages of war had as yet spared a little portion of the vega of Granada. A green belt of gardens and orchards still flourished round the city, extending along the banks of the Xenil and the Darro. They had been the solace and delight of the inhabitants in their happier days, and contributed to their sustenance in this time of scarcity. Ferdinand determined to make a final and exterminating ravage to the very walls of the city, so that there should not remain a single green thing for the sustenance of man or beast. The evening of a hot July day shone splendidly upon the Christian camp, which was in a bustle of preparation for the next day's service, for desperate resistance was expected from the Moors. The camp made a glorious appearance in the setting sun. The warriors' tents of the royal family and the attendant nobles were adorned with rich hangings, having sumptuous devices, and with costly furniture, forming, as it were, a little city of silk and brocade, where the pinnacles of pavilions of various gay colours, surmounted with waving standards and fluttering pennons, might vie with the domes and minarets of the capital they were besieging.

In the midst of this gaudy metropolis, the lofty tent of the queen domineered over the rest like a stately palace. The Marquis of Cadiz had courteously surrendered his own tent to the queen. It was the most complete and splendid in Christendom, and had been carried about with him throughout the war. In the centre rose a stately alfaneque, or pavilion, in Oriental taste, the rich hangings being supported by columns of lances, ornamented with martial devices. This centre pavilion, or silken tower, was surrounded by other compart-

* The house from whence the king and queen contemplated the battle is likewise to be seen at the present day. It is in the first street to the right on entering the village from the vega, and the royal arms are painted on the ceilings. It is inhabited by a worthy farmer, Francisco Garcia, who, in showing the house, refuses all compensation with true Spanish pride, offering, on the contrary, the hospitalities of his mansion to the stranger. His children are versed in the old Spanish ballads about the exploits of Hernando Perez del Pulgar and Garcilasso de la Vega.

ments, some of painted linen lined with silk, and all separated from each other by curtains. It was one of those camp palaces which are raised and demolished in an instant, like the city of canvas that surrounds them.

As the evening advanced the bustle in the camp subsided; every one sought repose, preparatory to the next day's toil. The king retired early, that he might be up with the crowing of the cock to head the destroying army in person. All stir of military preparation was hushed in the royal quarters; the very sound of minstrelsy was mute, and not the tinkling of a guitar was to be heard from the tents of the fair ladies of the court.

The queen had retired to the innermost part of her pavilion, where she was performing her orisons before a private altar. Perhaps the peril to which the king might be exposed in the next day's foray inspired her with more than usual devotion. While thus at her prayers, she was suddenly aroused by a glare of light and wreaths of suffocating smoke. In an instant the whole tent was in a blaze; there was a high gusty wind, which whirled the light flames from tent to tent, and speedily wrapped them all in one conflagration.

Isabella had barely time to save herself by instant flight. Her first thought, on being extricated from her tent, was for the safety of the king: she rushed to his tent, but the vigilant Ferdinand was already at the entrance of it. Starting from bed on the first alarm, and fancying it an assault of the enemy, he had seized his sword and buckler, and sallied forth undressed with his cuirass upon his arm.

The late so gorgeous camp was now a scene of wild confusion. The flames kept spreading from one pavilion to another, glaring upon the rich armour and golden and silver vessels, which seemed melting in the fervent heat. Many of the soldiery had erected booths and bowers of branches, which, being dry, crackled and blazed, and added to the rapid conflagration. The ladies of the court fled, shrieking and half dressed, from their tents; there was an alarm of drum and trumpet, and a distracted hurry about the camp of men half armed.

The Prince Juan had been snatched out of bed by an attendant and conveyed to the quarters of the Count de Cabra, which were at the entrance of the camp. The loyal count immediately summoned his people, and those of his cousin,

Don Alonzo de Montemayor, and formed a guard round the tent in which the prince was sheltered.

The idea that this was a stratagem of the Moors soon subsided, but it was feared that they might take advantage of it to commence an assault; the Marquis of Cadiz, therefore, sallied forth with three thousand horse to check any advance from the city. As they passed along it was one entire scene of hurry and consternation; some hastening to their posts at the call of drum and trumpet, some attempting to save rich effects and glittering armour, others dragging along terrified and restive horses.

When they emerged from the camp they found the whole firmament illumined; the flames whirled up in long light spires, and the air was filled with sparks and cinders. A bright glare was thrown upon the city, revealing every battlement and tower. Turbaned heads were seen gazing from every roof, and armour gleamed along the walls, yet not a single warrior sallied from the gates. The Moors suspected some stratagem on the part of the Christians, and kept quietly within their walls. By degrees the flames expired, the city faded from sight, all again became dark and quiet, and the Marquis of Cadiz returned with his cavalry to the camp.

CHAPTER XCIV.

When the day dawned on the Christian camp, nothing remained of that beautiful assemblage of stately pavilions but heaps of smouldering rubbish, with helms, and corslets, and other furniture of war, and masses of melted gold and silver glittering among the ashes. The wardrobe of the queen was entirely destroyed, and there was an immense loss in plate, jewels, costly stuffs, and sumptuous armour of the luxurious nobles. The fire at first had been attributed to treachery, but on investigation it was proved to be entirely accidental. The queen, on retiring to her prayers, had ordered her lady in attendance to remove a light burning near her couch, lest it should prevent her sleeping; through heedlessness, the taper was placed in another part of the tent, near the hangings, which, being blown against it by a gust of wind, immediately took fire.

The wary Ferdinand knew the sanguine temperament of the Moors, and hastened to prevent their deriving confidence

from the night's disaster. At break of day the drums and trumpets sounded to arms, and the Christian army issued from among the smoking ruins of their camp in shining squadrons, with flaunting banners and bursts of martial melodies, as though the preceding night had been a time of high festivity instead of terror.

The Moors had beheld the conflagration with wonder and perplexity. When the day broke, and they looked towards the Christian camp, they saw nothing but a dark smoking mass. Their scouts came in with the joyful intelligence that the whole camp was a scene of ruin. Scarce had the tidings spread throughout the city, than they beheld the Christian army advancing towards the walls; they considered it a feint to cover their desperate situation, and prepare for a retreat. Boabdil el Chico had one of his impulses of valour; he determined to take the field in person, and to follow up this signal blow which Allah had inflicted on the enemy.

The Christian army approached close to the city, and were laying waste the gardens and orchards, when Boabdil sallied forth, surrounded by all that was left of the flower and chivalry of Granada. There is one place where even the coward becomes brave: that sacred spot called home. What, then, must have been the valour of the Moors, a people always of fiery spirit, when the war was thus brought to their thresholds? They fought among the scenes of their loves and pleasures, the scenes of their infancy, and the haunts of their domestic life. They fought under the eyes of their wives and children, their old men and their maidens, of all that was helpless and all that was dear to them, for all Granada crowded on tower and battlement, watching with trembling heart the fate of this eventful day.

It was not so much one battle as a variety of battles. Every garden and orchard became a scene of deadly contest: every inch of ground was disputed by the Moors with an agony of grief and valour. Every inch of ground that the Christians advanced they valiantly maintained, but never did they advance with severer fighting or greater loss of blood.

The cavalry of Muza was in every part of the field. Wherever it came, it gave fresh ardour to the fight. The Moorish soldier, fainting with heat, fatigue, and wounds, was roused to new life at the approach of Muza; and even he, who lay gasping in the agonies of death, turned his face

towards him, and faintly uttered cheers and blessings as he

The Christians had by this time gained possession of various towers near the city, from whence they had been annoyed by crossbows and arquebuses. The Moors, scattered in various actions, were severely pressed. Boabdil, at the head of the cavaliers of his guard, displayed the utmost valour; mingling in the fight, in various parts of the field, and endeavouring to inspirit the foot soldiers to the combat. But the Moorish infantry was never to be depended upon. In the heat of the action a panic seized upon them. They fled; leaving their sovereign exposed, with his handful of cavaliers, to an overwhelming force. Boabdil was on the point of falling into the hands of the Christians; when, wheeling round, with his followers, they all threw the reins on the necks of their fleet steeds, and took refuge, by dint of hoof, within the walls of the city.*

Muza endeavoured to retrieve the fortune of the field. He threw himself before the retreating infantry; calling upon them to turn, and fight for their homes, their families, for everything that was sacred and dear to them. It was all in vain. They were totally broken and dismayed, and fled tumultuously for the gates. Muza would fain have kept the field with his cavalry; but this devoted band, having stood the brunt of war throughout this desperate campaign, was fearfully reduced in number, and many of the survivors were crippled and enfeebled by their wounds. Slowly and reluctantly he retreated to the city, his bosom swelling with indignation and despair. When he entered the gates, he ordered them to be closed, and secured with bolts and bars; for he refused to place any further confidence in the archers and arquebusiers, who were stationed to defend them; and he vowed never more to sally forth with foot soldiers to the field.

In the meantime, the artillery thundered from the walls, and checked all further advances of the Christians. King Ferdinand, therefore called off his troops, and returned in triumph to the ruins of his camp; leaving the beautiful city of Granada wrapped in the smoke of her fields, and gardens, and surrounded by the bodies of her slaughtered children.

Such was the last sally, made by the Moors, in defence of their favourite city. The French ambassador, who witnessed

* Zurita, lib. xx. c. 88.

it, was filled with wonder at the prowess, the dexterity, and daring, of the Moslems. In truth, this whole war was an instance, memorable in history, of the most persevering resolution. For nearly ten years had the war endured, exhibiting an almost uninterrupted series of disasters to the Moorish arms. Their towns had been taken one after another, and their brethren slain, or led into captivity. Yet they disputed every city, and town, and fortress, and castle; nay, every rock itself, as if they had been inspirited by victories. Wherever they could plant foot to fight, or find wall or cliff from whence to lanch an arrow, they disputed their beloved country; and now, when their capital was cut off from all relief, and had a whole nation thundering at its gates, they still maintained defence, as if they hoped some miracle to interpose in their behalf. "Their obstinate resistance," says an ancient chronicler, "shows the grief with which the Moors yielded up the vega, which was to them a paradise and heaven. Exerting all the strength of their arms, they embraced, as it were, that most beloved soil, from which neither wounds, nor defeats, nor death itself could part them. They stood firm, battling for it with the united force of love and grief; never drawing back the foot, while they had hands to fight, or fortune to befriend them."*

CHAPTER XCV.

THE Moors now shut themselves up gloomily within their walls. There were no longer any daring sallies from their gates; and even the martial clangour of the drum and trumpet, which had continually resounded within that warrior city, was now seldom heard from its battlements. For a time they flattered themselves with hopes, that the late conflagration of the camp would discourage the besiegers; that, as in former years, their invasion would end with the summer, and that they would again withdraw before the autumnal rains. The measures of Ferdinand and Isabella soon crushed these hopes. They gave orders to build a regular city upon the site of their camp, to convince the Moors, that the siege was to endure until the surrender of Granada. Nine of the principal cities of Spain were charged with this stupendous undertaking, and they emulated each other with a zeal worthy

* Abarca, Reyes de Aragon, rey xxx. c. 3.

of the cause. "It verily seemed," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "as though some miracle operated to aid this pious work, so rapidly did arise a formidable city, with solid edifices, and powerful walls, and mighty towers, where lately had been seen nothing but tents and light pavilions. The city was traversed by two principal streets, in form of a cross, terminating in four gates, facing the four winds; and in the centre was a vast square, where the whole army might be assembled. To this city it was proposed to give the name of Isabella, so dear to the army and the nation; but that pious princess," adds Antonio Agapida, "calling to mind the holy cause in which it was erected, gave it the name of Santa Fé, or the city of the Holy Faith, and it remains to this day, a monument of the piety and glory of the Catholic sovereigns."

Hither the merchants soon resorted from all points. Long trains of mules were seen every day entering and departing from its gates; the streets were crowded with magazines filled with all kinds of costly and luxurious merchandise; a scene of bustling commerce and prosperity took place, while unhappy Granada remained shut up and desolate.

In the meantime the besieged city began to suffer the distress of famine. Its supplies were all cut off. A cavalgada of flocks and herds, and mules laden with money, coming to the relief of the city from the mountains of the Alpuxarras, was taken by the Marquis of Cadiz, and led in triumph to the camp, in sight of the suffering Moors. Autumn arrived; but the harvests had been swept from the face of the country; a rigorous winter was approaching, and the city was almost destitute of provisions. The people sank into deep despondency. They called to mind all that had been predicted by astrologers, at the birth of their ill-starred sovereign, and all that had been foretold of the fate of Granada, at the time of the capture of Zahara.

Boabdil was alarmed by the gathering dangers from without, and by the clamours of his starving people. He summoned a council, composed of the principal officers of the army, the alcaydes of the fortresses, the xeques, or sages of the city, and the alfaquis, or doctors of the faith. They assembled in the great Hall of Audience of the Alhambra, and despair was painted in their countenances. Boabdil demanded of them what was to be done in their present extremity; and their answer was, "Surrender." The venerable

Abal Cazim Abdelmelic, governor of the city, represented its unhappy state. "Our granaries are nearly exhausted, and no further supplies are to be expected. The provender for the war horses is required as sustenance for the soldiery; the very horses themselves are killed for food. Of seven thousand steeds, which once could be sent into the field, three hundred only remain. Our city contains two hundred thousand inhabitants, old and young, with each a mouth that calls piteously for bread."

The xeques and principal citizens declared, that the people could no longer sustain the labours and sufferings of a defence: "And of what avail is our defence," said they, "when the enemy is determined to persist in the siege? what alternative remains, but to surrender, or to die?"

The heart of Boabdil was touched by this appeal, and he maintained a gloomy silence. He had cherished some faint hope of relief from the Soldan of Egypt, or the Barbary powers; but it was now at an end. Even if such assistance were to be sent, he had no longer a seaport where it might debark. The counsellors saw, that the resolution of the king was shaken, and they united their voices in urging him to capitulate.

The valiant Muza alone arose in opposition. "It is yet too early," said he, "to talk of a surrender. Our means are not exhausted; we have yet one source of strength remaining, terrible in its effects, and which often has achieved the most signal victory. It is our despair. Let us rouse the mass of the people; let us put weapons in their hands; let us fight the enemy to the very utmost, until we rush upon the points of their lances. I am ready to lead the way into the thickest of their squadrons; and much rather would I be numbered among those who fell in the defence of Granada, than of those who survived to capitulate for her surrender!"

The words of Muza were without effect, for they were addressed to broken-spirited and heartless men, or men perhaps to whom sad experience had taught discretion. They were arrived at that state of public depression, when heroes and heroism are no longer regarded, and when old men and their counsels rise into importance. Boabdil el Chico yielded to the general voice. It was determined to capitulate with the Christian sovereigns, and the venerable Abal Cazim Abdelmelic was sent forth to the camp, empowered to treat for terms.

CHAPTER XCVI.

The old governor, Abal Cazim Abdelmelic, was received with great distinction by Ferdinand and Isabella, who appointed Gonzalvo of Cordova, and Fernando de Zafra, secretary to the king, to confer with him. All Granada awaited in trembling anxiety the result of his negociations. After repeated conferences, he at length returned with the ultimate terms of the Catholic sovereigns. They agreed to suspend all attack for seventy days, at the end of which time, if no succour should have arrived to the Moorish king, the city of Granada was to be surrendered.

All Christian captives were to be liberated without ransom.

Boabdil and his principal cavaliers were to take an oath of fealty to the Castilian crown; and certain valuable territories in the Alpuxarras mountains were to be assigned to the Moorish monarch for his maintenance.

The Moors of Granada were to become subjects of the Spanish sovereigns, retaining their possessions, their arms, and horses, and yielding up nothing but their artillery. They were to be protected in the exercise of their religion, and governed by their own laws, administered by cadis of their own faith, under governors appointed by the sovereigns. They were to be exempted from tribute for three years, after which term the pay was to be the same as they had been accustomed to render to their native monarchs.

Those who chose to depart for Africa, within three years, were to be provided with a passage for themselves and their effects, free of charge, from whatever port they should prefer.

For the fulfilment of these articles, four hundred hostages from the principal families were required, previous to the surrender, to be subsequently restored. The son of the King of Granada, and all other hostages in possession of the Castilian sovereigns, were to be given up at the same time.

Such were the conditions that the wazir, Abul Casim, laid before the council of Granada, as the best that could be obtained from the besieging foe.

When the members of the council found that the awful moment had arrived, in which they were to sign and seal the prediction of their empire, and blot themselves out as a nation, all firmness deserted them, and many gave way to tears. Muza alone retained an unaltered mien. "Leave, seniors,"

cried he, "this idle lamentation to helpless women and children. We are men; we have hearts, not to shed tender tears, but drops of blood. I see the spirit of the people so cast down, that it is impossible to save the kingdom. Yet, there still remains an alternative for noble minds—a glorious death: Let us die defending our liberty, and avenging the woes of Granada! Our mother Earth will receive her children into her bosom, safe from the chains and oppressions of the conqueror; or, should any fail of a sepulchre to hide his remains, he will not want a sky to cover him: Allah forbid it should be said, the nobles of Granada feared to die in her defence!"

Muza ceased to speak, and a dead silence reigned in the assembly. Boabdil el Chico looked anxiously round, and scanned every face; but he read in them all the anxiety of careworn men, in whose hearts enthusiasm was dead, and who had grown callous to every chivalrous appeal. "Allah achbar! God is great!" exclaimed he: "there is no God but God, and Mahomet is his prophet! It is in vain to struggle against the will of Heaven. Too surely was it written in the book of fate, that I should be unfortunate, and the kingdom expire under my rule!"

"Allah achbar! God is great!" echoed the viziers and alfaquis: "the will of God be done!" So they all accorded with the king, that these evils were pre-ordained; that it was ho[redacted]d with them; and that the terms offered by the Castilian monarchs were as favourable as could be expected. When Muza saw, that they were about to sign the treaty of surrender, he rose, in violent indignation. "Do not deceive yourselves," cried he, "nor think the Christians will be faithful to their promises, or their king as magnanimous in conquest, as he has been victorious in war. Death is the least we have to fear: it is the plundering and sacking of our city, the profanation of our mosques, the ruin of our homes, the violation of our wives and daughters; cruel oppression, bigoted intolerance, whips and chains; the dungeon, the faggot, and the stake: such are the miseries and indignities we shall see and suffer; at least those grovelling souls will see them, who now shrink from an honourable death. For my part, by Allah, I will never witness them!" With these words he left the council chamber, and strode gloomily through the Court of Lions, and the outer halls of the Alhambra, without deigning to speak to the obsequious courtiers, who attended

in them. He repaired to his dwelling, armed himself at all points, mounted his favourite war horse, and, issuing forth from the city by the gate of Elvira, was never seen or heard of more.*

Such is the account given by Arabian historians of the exit of Muza ben Abel Gazan; but the venerable Fray Antonio Agapida endeavours to clear up the mystery of his fate. That very evening, a party of Andalusian cavaliers, somewhat more than half a score of lances, were riding along the banks of the Xenil, where it winds through the vega. They beheld in the twilight a Moorish warrior approaching, closely locked up from head to foot in proof. His visor was closed, his lance in rest, his powerful charger barbed, like himself, in steel. The Christians were lightly armed, with corslet, helm, and target; for, during the truce, they apprehended no attack. Seeing, however, the unknown warrior approach in this hostile guise, they challenged him to stand and declare himself.

The Moslem answered not; but, charging into the midst of them, transfixed one knight with his lance, and bore him out of his saddle to the earth. Wheeling round, he attacked the others with his cimiter. His blows were furious and deadly: he seemed regardless what wounds he received, so he could but slay. He was evidently fighting, not for glory, but revenge; eager to inflict death, but careless of surviving to enjoy victory. Nearly one half of the cavaliers fell beneath his sword, before he received a dangerous wound, so completely was he cased in armour of proof. At length he was desperately wounded; and his steed, being pierced by a lance, fell to the ground. The Christians, admiring the valour of the Moor, would have spared his life; but he continued to fight upon his knees, brandishing a keen dagger of Fez. Finding at length he could no longer battle, and determined not to be taken prisoner, he threw himself, with an expiring exertion, into the Xenil, and his armour sank him to the bottom of the stream.

This unknown warrior the venerable Agapida pronounces to have been Muza ben Abel Gazan; and says, his horse was recognised by certain converted Moors of the Christian camp: the fact, however, has always remained in doubt.

* Conde, part iv.

CHAPTER XCVII.

THE capitulation for the surrender of Granada was signed on the 25th of November, 1481, and produced a sudden cessation of those hostilities which had raged for so many years. Christian and Moor might now be seen mingling courteously on the banks of the Xenil and the Darro, where to have met a few days previous would have produced a scene of sanguinary contest. Still, as the Moors might be suddenly aroused to defence, if, within the allotted term of seventy days, succours should arrive from abroad; and as they were, at all times, a rash, inflammable people, the wary Ferdinand maintained a vigilant watch upon the city, and permitted no supplies of any kind to enter. His garrisons in the sea-ports, and his cruizers in the Straits of Gibraltar, were ordered likewise to guard against any relief from the Grand Soldan of Egypt, or the princes of Barbary.

There was no need of such precautions. Those powers were either too much engrossed by their own wars, or too much daunted by the success of the Spanish arms, to interfere in a desperate cause; and the unfortunate Moors of Granada were abandoned to their fate.

The month of December had nearly passed away; the famine became extreme, and there was no hope of any favourable event within the term specified in the capitulation. Boabdil saw, that to hold out to the end of the allotted time would only be to protract the miseries of his people. With the consent of his council, he determined to surrender the city on the 6th of January. On the 30th of December, he sent his grand vizier, Jusef Aben Comixa, with the four hundred hostages, to King Ferdinand, to make known his intention: bearing him, at the same time, a present of a magnificent cimeter, and two Arabian steeds, superbly caparisoned.

The unfortunate Boabdil was doomed to meet with trouble to the end of his career. The very next day, the santon, or dervise, Hamet Aben Zarah, the same who had uttered prophecies and excited commotions on former occasions, suddenly made his appearonce. Whence he came, no one knew: it was rumoured that he had been in the mountains of the Alpuxarras, and on the coast of Barbary, endeavouring to rouse the Moslems to the relief of Granada. He was reduced

to a skeleton. His eyes glowed in their sockets like coals, and his speech was little better than frantic raving. He harangued the populace in the streets and squares; inveighed against the capitulation; denounced the king and nobles as Moslems only in name; and called upon the people to sally forth against the unbelievers, for that Allah had decreed them a signal victory.

Upwards of twenty thousand of the populace seized their arms, and paraded the streets with shouts and outcries. The shops and houses were shut up; the king himself did not dare to venture forth, but remained a kind of prisoner in the Alhambra.

The turbulent multitude continued running, and shouting, and howling about the city, during the day and a part of the night. Hunger and a wintry tempest tamed their frenzy; and, when morning came, the enthusiast who had led them on had disappeared. Whether he had been disposed of by the emissaries of the king, or by the leading men of the city, is not known; his disappearance remaining a mystery.*

The Moorish king now issued from the Alhambra, attended by his principal nobles, and harangued the populace. He set forth the necessity of complying with the capitulation, from the famine that reigned in the city, the futility of defence, and from the hostages having already been delivered into the hands of the besiegers.

In the dejection of his spirits, the unfortunate Boabdil attributed to himself the miseries of the country. "It was my crime, in ascending the throne in rebellion against my father," said he, mournfully, "which has brought these woes upon the kingdom; but Allah has grievously visited my sins upon my head! For your sake, my people, I have now made this treaty, to protect you from the sword, your little ones from famine, your wives and daughters from the outrages of war, and to secure you in the enjoyment of your properties, your liberties, your laws, and your religion, under a sovereign of happier destinies than the ill-starred Boabdil!" The versatile populace were touched by the humility of their sovereign: they agreed to adhere to the capitulation; there was even a faint shout of "Long live Boabdil the unfortunate!" and they all returned to their homes in perfect tranquillity.

* Mariana.

Boabdil immediately sent missives to King Ferdinand, apprizing him of these events, and of his fears lest further delay should produce new tumults. He proposed, therefore, to surrender the city on the following day. The Castilian sovereigns assented with great satisfaction; and preparations were made, both in city and camp, for this great event, that was to seal the fate of Granada

It was a night of doleful lamentings within the walls of the Alhambra; for the household of Boabdil were preparing to take a last farewell of that delightful abode. All the royal treasures, and the most precious effects of the Alhambra, were hastily packed upon mules; the beautiful apartments were despoiled, with tears and wailings, by their own inhabitants. Before the dawn of day, a mournful cavalcade moved obscurely out of a postern gate of the Alhambra, and departed through one of the most retired quarters of the city. It was composed of the family of the unfortunate Boabdil, whom he sent off thus privately, that they might not be exposed to the eyes of scoffers, or the exultation of the enemy. The mother of Boabdil, the sultana Ayxa la Horra, rode on in silence, with dejected yet dignified demeanour; but his wife Zorayma, and all the females of his household, gave way to loud lamentations, as they gave a last look to their favourite abode, now a mass of gloomy towers, behind them. They were attended by the ancient domestics of the household, and by a small guard of veteran Moors, loyally attached to the fallen monarch, and who would have sold their lives dearly in defence of his family. The city was yet buried in sleep, as they passed through its silent streets. The guards at the gate shed tears as they opened it for their departure. They tarried not, but proceeded along the banks of the Xenil, on the road that leads to the Alpuxarras, until they arrived at a hamlet, at some distance from the city, where they halted, and waited until they should be joined by King Boabdil.

CHAPTER XCVIII.

The sun had scarcely begun to shed his beams upon the summits of the snowy mountains, which rise above Granada, when the Christian camp was in motion. A detachment of horse and foot, led by distinguished cavaliers, and accom-

panied by Hernando de Talavera, bishop of Avila, proceeded to take possession of the Alhambra and the towers. It had been stipulated in the capitulation, that the detachment sent for this purpose should not enter by the streets of the city. A road had, therefore, been opened outside of the walls, leading by the Puerta de los Molinos (or the Gate of the Mills) to the summit of the Hill of Martyrs, and across the hill to a postern gate of the Alhambra.

When the detachment arrived at the summit of the hill, the Moorish king came forth from the gate, attended by a handful of cavaliers, leaving his vizier, Jusef Aben Comixa, to deliver up the palace. "Go, senior," said he, to the commander of the detachment; "go, and take possession of those fortresses, which Allah has bestowed upon your powerful lord, in punishment of the sins of the Moors!" He said no more, but passed mournfully on, along the same road by which the Spanish cavaliers had come; descending to the vega, to meet the Catholic sovereigns. The troops entered the Alhambra, the gates of which were wide open, and all its splendid courts and halls silent and deserted. In the meantime, the Christian court and army poured out of the city of Santa Fé, and advanced across the vega. The king and queen, with the prince and princess, and the dignitaries and ladies of the court, took the lead: accompanied by the different orders of monks and friars, and surrounded by the royal guards, splendidly arrayed. The procession moved slowly forward, and paused at the village of Armilla, at the distance of half a league from the city.

The sovereigns waited here with impatience, their eyes fixed on the lofty tower of the Alhambra, watching for the appointed signal of possession. The time that had elapsed since the departure of the detachment seemed to them more than necessary for the purpose, and the anxious mind of Ferdinand began to entertain doubts of some commotion in the city. At length they saw the silver cross, the great standard of this crusade, elevated on the Torre de la Vela, or great watch-tower, and sparkling in the sunbeams. This was done by Hernando de Talavera, bishop of Avila. Beside it was planted the pennon of the glorious apostle St. James; and a great shout of "Santiago! Santiago!" rose throughout the army. Lastly was reared the royal standard, by the king of arms, with the shout of "Castile! Castile! For

King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella!" The words were echoed by the whole army, with acclamations that resounded across the vega. At sight of these signals of possession, the sovereigns fell upon their knees, giving thanks to God for this great triumph. The whole assembled host followed their example; and the choristers of the royal chapel broke forth into the solemn anthem of *Te Deum laudamus!*

The procession now resumed its march with joyful alacrity, to the sound of triumphant music, until they came to a small mosque, near the banks of the Xenil, and not far from the foot of the Hill of Martyrs, which edifice remains to the present day, consecrated as the hermitage of St. Sebastian. Here the sovereigns were met by the unfortunate Boabdil, accompanied by about fifty cavaliers and domestics. As he drew near, he would have dismounted, in token of homage; but Ferdinand prevented him. He then proffered to kiss the king's hand, but this sign of vassalage was likewise declined: whereupon, not to be outdone in magnanimity, he leaned forward, and saluted the right arm of Ferdinand. Queen Isabella, also, refused to receive this ceremonial of homage; and, to console him under his adversity, delivered to him his son, who had remained as hostage ever since Boabdil's liberation from captivity. The Moorish monarch pressed his child to his bosom with tender emotion, and they seemed mutually endeared to each other by their misfortunes.*

He then delivered the keys of the city to King Ferdinand, with an air of mingled melancholy and resignation. "These keys," said he, "are the last relics of the Arabian empire in Spain. Thine, O king, are our trophies, our kingdom, and our person! Such is the will of God! Receive them with the clemency thou hast promised, and which we look for at thy hands!"†

King Ferdinand restrained his exultation into an air of serene magnanimity. "Doubt not our promises," replied he, "or, that thou shalt regain from our friendship the prosperity of which the fortune of war has deprived thee."

On receiving the keys, King Ferdinand handed them to the queen. She, in her turn, presented them to her son, Prince Juan, who delivered them to the Count de Tendilla; that brave and loyal cavalier being appointed alcayde of the city, and captain-general of the kingdom of Granada.

* Zurita, Anales de Aragon.

† Abarca, Anales de Aragon, rey xxx. c. 3.

Having surrendered the last symbol of power, the unfortunate Boabdil continued on towards the Alpuxarras, that he might not behold the entrance of the Christians into his capital. His devoted band of cavaliers followed him in gloomy silence; but heavy sighs burst from their bosoms, as shouts of joy and strains of triumphant music were borne on the breeze from the victorious army.

Having rejoined his family, Boabdil set forward with a heavy heart for his allotted residence in the valley of Porchena. At two leagues distance, the cavalcade, winding into the skirts of the Alpuxarras, ascended an eminence commanding the last view of Granada. As they arrived at this spot, the Moors paused involuntarily, to take a farewell gaze at their beloved city, which a few steps more would shut from their sight for ever. Never had it appeared so lovely in their eyes. The sunshine, so bright in that transparent climate, lighted up each tower and minaret, and rested gloriously upon the crowning battlements of the Alhambra; while the vega spread its enamelled bosom of verdure below, glistening with the silver windings of the Xenil. The Moorish cavaliers gazed with a silent agony of tenderness and grief, upon that delicious abode, the scene of their loves and pleasures. While they yet looked, a light cloud of smoke burst forth from the citadel; and presently a peal of artillery, faintly heard, told that the city was taken possession of, and the throne of the Moslem kings was lost for ever. The heart of Boabdil, softened by misfortunes, and overcharged with grief, could no longer contain itself. "Allah achbar! God is great!" said he, but the words of resignation died upon his lips, and he burst into a flood of tears.

His mother, the intrepid sultana Ayxa la Horra, was indignant at his weakness. "You do well," said she, "to weep like a woman, for what you failed to defend like a man!"

The vizier Aben Comixa endeavoured to console his royal master. "Consider, sire," said he, "that the most signal misfortunes often render men as renowned as the most prosperous achievements, provided they sustain them with magnanimity." The unhappy manarch, however, was not to be consoled. His tears continued to flow. "Allah achbar!" exclaimed he, "when did misfortunes ever equal mine!"

From this circumstance the hill, which is not far from

Padul, took the name of Fez Allah Achbar; but the point of view commanding the last prospect of Granada is known among Spaniards by the name of *el ultimo suspiro del Moro*, or, "the last sigh of the Moor."

CHAPTER XCIX.

When the Castilian sovereigns had received the keys of Granada from the hands of Boabdil el Chico, the royal army resumed its triumphant march. As it approached the gates of the city, in all the pomp of courtly and chivalrous array, a procession of a different kind came forth to meet it. This was composed of more than five hundred Christian captives, many of whom had languished for years in Moorish dungeons. Pale and emaciated, they came clanking their chains in triumph, and shedding tears of joy. They were received with tenderness by the sovereigns. The king hailed them as good Spaniards; as men loyal and brave; as martyrs to the holy cause. The queen distributed liberal relief among them with her own hands, and they passed on before the squadrons of the army, singing hymns of jubilee.*

The sovereigns did not enter the city, on this day of its surrender; but waited until it should be fully occupied by their troops, and public tranquillity ensured. The Marquis de Villena, and the Count de Tendilla, with three thousand cavalry, and as many infantry, marched in, and took possession, accompanied by the proselyte prince, Cidi Yahye, now known by the Christian appellation of Don Pedro de Granada, who was appointed chief alguazil of the city, and had charge of the Moorish inhabitants; and by his son, the late Prince Alnayer, now Don Alonzo de Granada, who was appointed admiral of the fleets. In a little while every battlement glistened with Christian helms and lances, the standard of the faith and of the realm floated from every tower, and the thundering salvos of the ordnance told, that the subjugation of the city was complete.

The grandees and cavaliers now knelt, and kissed the hands of the king and queen, and the Prince Juan, and congratulated them on the acquisition of so great a kingdom; after which the royal procession returned in state to Santa Fé.

It was on the 6th of January, the day of kings, and festival

* Abarca, ubi supra. Zurita, &c.

of the Epiphany, that the sovereigns made their triumphal entry. "The king and queen," says the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida, "looked on this occasion as more than mortal. The venerable ecclesiastics, to whose advice and zeal this glorious conquest ought in a great measure to be attributed, moved along, with hearts swelling with holy exultation, but with chastened and downcast looks of edifying humility; while the hardy warriors, in tossing plumes and shining steel, seemed elevated with a stern joy, at finding themselves in possession of this object of so many toils and perils. As the streets resounded with the tramp of steed, and swelling peals of music, the Moors buried themselves in the deepest recesses of their dwellings. There they bewailed in secret the fallen glory of their race; but suppressed their groans, lest they should be heard by their enemies, and increase their triumph."

The royal procession advanced to the principal mosque, which had been consecrated as a cathedral. Here the sovereigns offered up prayers and thanksgivings, and the choir of the royal chapel chanted a triumphant anthem, in which they were joined by all the courtiers and cavaliers. "Nothing," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "could exceed the thankfulness to God of the pious King Ferdinand, for having enabled him to eradicate from Spain the empire and name of that accursed heathen race, and for the elevation of the cross in that city, wherein the impious doctrines of Mahomet had so long been cherished. In the fervour of his spirit, he supplicated from Heaven a continuance of its grace, and that this glorious triumph might be perpetuated."* The prayer of the pious monarch was responded by the people, and even his enemies were for once convinced of his sincerity.

When the religious ceremonies were concluded, the court ascended to the stately palace of the Alhambra, and entered by the great gate of justice. The halls, lately occupied by turbaned infidels, now rustled with stately dames and Christian courtiers, who wandered with eager curiosity over this far-famed palace, admiring its verdant courts and gushing fountains, its halls decorated with elegant arabesques, and storied with inscriptions, and the splendour of its gilded and brilliantly painted ceilings.

It had been a last request of the unfortunate Boabdil, and

* The words of Fray Antonio Agapida are little more than an echo of those of the worthy Jesuit, Father Mariana. (lib. xxv. c. 18.)

one which showed how deeply he felt the transition of his fate, that no persom might be permitted to enter or depart by the gate of the Alhambra through which he had sallied forth to surrender his capital. His request was granted: the portal was closed up, and remains so to the present day,—a mute memorial of that event.*

Note.—The existence of this gateway, and the story connected with it, are perhaps known to few, but were identified in the researches made to verify this history. The gateway is at the bottom of a great tower, at some distance from the main body of the Alhambra. The tower has been rent and ruined by gunpowder, at the time when the fortress was evacuated by the French. Great masses lie around, half covered by vines and fig-trees. A poor man, by the name of Matteo Ximenes, who lives in one of the hovels among the ruins of the Alhambra, where his family has lived for many generations, pointed out the gateway, still closed up with stones. He remembered to have heard his father and grandfather say, that it had always been stopped up, and that out of it King Boabdil had gone, when he surrendered Granada. The route of the unfortunate king may be traced from thence across the garden of the convent of Los Martyres, and down a ravine beyond, through a street of gipsy caves and hovels, by the gate of Los Molinos, and so on to the Hermitage of St. Sebastian. None but an antiquarian, however, will be able to trace it, unless aided by the humble historian of the place, Matteo Ximenes.

The Spanish sovereigns fixed their throne in the presence chamber of the palace, so long the seat of Moorish royalty. Hither the principal inhabitants of Granada repaired, to pay them homage, and kiss their hands, in token of vassalage; and their example was followed by deputies from all the towns and fortresses of the Alpuxarras, which had not hitherto submitted.

Thus terminated the war of Granada, after ten years of incessant fighing; "equalling," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "the far-famed siege of Troy in duration, and ending, like that, in the capture of the city." Thus ended, also, the dominion of the Moors in Spain, after having endured seven hundred and seventy-eight years from the memorable defeat of Roderick, the last of the Goths, on the banks of the Guada-

* Garibay, Compend. Hist. lib. xl. cap. 42.

lete. The authentic Agapida is uncommonly particular in fixing the epoch of this event. "This great triumph of our holy Catholic faith," according to his computation, "took place in the beginning of January, in the year of our Lord 1492; being 3655 years from the population of Spain by the patriarch Tubal: 3797 from the general deluge; 5453 from the creation of the world, according to Hebrew calculation; and in the month Rabic, in the 897th year of the Hegira, or flight of Mahomet: whom may God confound!" saith the pious Agapida.

APPENDIX.

FATE OF BOABDIL EL CHICO.

The Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada is finished: but the reader may be desirous of knowing the subsequent fortunes of some of the principal personages. The unfortunate Boabdil retired to the valley of Porchena, where a small but fertile territory had been allotted him; comprising several towns, with all their rights and revenues. Great estates had likewise been bestowed on his vizier, Josef Aben Comixa, and his valiant relation and friend, Josef Venegas, both of whom resided near him. Were it in the heart of man, in the enjoyment of present competence, to forget past splendour, Boabdil might at length have been happy. Dwelling in the bosom of a delightful valley, surrounded by obedient vassals, devoted friends, and a loving family, he might have looked back upon his past career as upon a troubled and terrific dream; and might have thanked his stars, that he had at length awaked to sweet and tranquil security. But the dethroned prince could never forget that he had once been a monarch; and the remembrance of the regal splendours of Granada made all present comforts contemptible in his eyes. No exertions were spared by Ferdinand and Isabella, to induce him to embrace the Catholic religion: but he remained true to the faith of his fathers; and it added not a little to his humiliation, to live a vassal under Christian sovereigns.

It is probable, that his residence in the kingdom was equally irksome to the politic Ferdinand; who could not feel perfectly secure in his newly conquered territories, while there was one within their bounds who might revive pretensions to the throne. A private bargain was therefore made, in the year 1496 between Ferdinand and Josef Aben Comixa; in which the latter, as vizier of Boabdil, undertook to dispose of his master's scanty territory for eighty thousand ducats of gold. This, it is affirmed, was done without the consent or knowledge of Boabdil; but the vizier probably thought he was acting for the best. The shrewd Ferdinand does not appear to have made any question about the right of the

vizier to make the sale; but paid the money with secret exultation. Josef Aben Comixa loaded the treasure upon mules, and departed joyfully for the Alpuxarras. He spread the money in triumph before Boabdil. "Señior," said he, "I have observed, that, as long as you live here, you are exposed to constant peril. The Moors are rash and irritable. They may make some sudden insurrection, elevate your standard as a pretext, and thus overwhelm you and your friends with utter ruin. I have observed also, that you pine away with grief; being continually reminded in this country, that you were once its sovereign, but never more must hope to reign. I have put an end to these evils. Your territory is sold. Behold the price of it. With this gold you may buy far greater possessions in Africa, where you may live in honour and security."

When Boabdil heard these words, he burst into a sudden transport of rage; and, drawing his cimeter, would have sacrificed the officious Josef on the spot, had not the attendants interfered, and hurried the vizier from his presence.

Boabdil was not of a vindictive spirit, and his anger soon passed away. He saw that the evil was done, and he knew the spirit of the politic Ferdinand too well, to hope that he would retract the bargain. Gathering together the money, therefore, and all his jewels and precious effects, he departed with his family and household for a port, where a vessel had been carefully provided by the Castilian king to transport them to Africa.

A crowd of his former subjects witnessed his embarkation. As the sails were unfurled, and swelled to the breeze, and the vessel parted from the land, the spectators would fain have given him a parting cheering; but the humbled state of their once proud sovereign forced itself upon their minds, and the ominous surname of his youth rose involuntarily to their tongues. "Farewell, Boabdil! Allah preserve thee, El Zogoybi!" burst spontaneously from their lips. The unlucky appellation sank into the heart of the expatriated monarch; and tears dimmed his eyes, as the snowy summits of the mountains of Granada gradually faded from his view.

He was received with welcome at the court of his relation, Muley Ahmed, King of Fez, and resided for many years in his territories. How he passed his life, whether repining or resigned, history does not mention. The last we find recorded

of him is in the year 1536, thirty-four years after the surrender of Granada; when he followed the King of Fez to the field, to quell the rebellion of two brothers, named Xerifes. The armies came in sight of each other on the banks of the Guadiswed, at the ford of Bacuba. The river was deep; the banks were high and broken. For three days the armies remained firing at each other across the stream, neither party venturing to attempt the dangerous ford.

At length the King of Fez divided his army into three battalions; the first led on by his son and by Boabdil el Chico. They boldly dashed across the ford, scrambled up the opposite bank, and attempted to keep the enemy employed, until the other battalions should have time to cross. The rebel army, however, attacked them with such fury, that the son of the King of Fez and several of the bravest alcaydes were slain upon the spot, and multitudes driven back into the river, which was already crowded with passing troops. A dreadful confusion took place; the horse trampled upon the foot; the enemy pressed on them with fearful slaughter; those who escaped the sword perished by the stream. The river was choked by the dead bodies of men and horses, and by the scattered baggage of the army. In this scene of horrible carnage fell Boabdil, truly called El Zogoybi, or the unlucky: "an instance," says the ancient chronicler, "of the scornful caprice of fortune; dying in defence of the kingdom of another, after wanting spirit to die in defence of his own."*

Note.—A portrait of Boabdil el Chico is to be seen in the picture gallery of the Generalife. He is represented with a mild, handsome face, a fair complexion, and yellow hair. His dress is of yellow brocade, relieved with black velvet, and he has a black velvet cap, surmounted with a crown. In the armoury of Madrid are two suits of armour, said to have belonged to him; one of solid steel, with very little ornament; the morion closed. From the proportions of these suits of armour, he must have been of full stature and vigorous form.

DEATH OF THE MARQUIS OF CADIZ.

The renowned Roderigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis Duke of Cadiz, was unquestionably the most distinguished among the

* Marmol. Descrip. de Africa, p. i. lib. ii. cap. 40. Idem, Hist. Reb. de los Moros, lib. i. cap. 21.

cavaliers of Spain, for his zeal, enterprise, and heroism in the great crusade of Granada. He began the war by the capture of Alhama; he was engaged in almost every inroad and siege of importance during its continuance; and he was present at the surrender of the capital, which was the closing scene of the conquest. The renown he thus acquired was sealed by his death, in the forty-eighth year of his age, which happened almost immediately at the close of his triumphs, and before a leaf of his laurels had time to wither. He died at his palace, in the city of Seville, on the twenty-seventh day of August, 1492, but a few months after the surrender of Granada, and of an illness caused by the exposure and fatigues he had undergone in this memorable war. That honest chronicler, Andres Bernaldes, the curate of Los Palacios, who was a contemporary of the marquis, draws his portrait from actual knowledge and observation. "He was universally cited," says he, "as the most perfect model of chivalrous virtue of the age. He was temperate, chaste, and rigidly devout; a benignant commander, a valiant defender of his vassals, a great lover of justice, and an enemy to all flatterers, liars, robbers, traitors, and poltroons. His ambition was of a lofty kind: he sought to distinguish himself and his family by heroic and resounding deeds, and to increase the patrimony of his ancestors by the acquisition of castles, domains, vassals, and other princely possessions. His recreations were all of a warlike nature: he delighted in geometry, as applied to fortifications, and spent much time and treasure in erecting and repairing fortresses. He relished music, but of a military kind: the sound of clarions and sackbuts, of drums and trumpets. Like a true cavalier, he was a protector of the sex on all occasions, and an injured woman never applied to him in vain for redress. His prowess was so well known, and his courtesy to the fair, that the ladies of the court, when they accompanied the queen to the wars, rejoiced to find themselves under his protection; for, wherever his banner was displayed, the Moors dreaded to adventure. He was a faithful and devoted friend, but a formidable enemy; for he was slow to forgive, and his vengeance was persevering and terrible."

The death of this good cavalier spread grief and lamentation throughout all ranks; for he was universally honoured and beloved. His relations, dependents, and companions in

arms put on mourning for his loss: and so numerous were they, that half of Seville was clad in black. None, however, deplored his death more deeply and sincerely than his friend and chosen companion, Don Alonzo de Aguilar.

The funeral ceremonies were of the most solemn and sumptuous kind. The body of the marquis was arrayed in a costly shirt, a doublet of brocade, a sayo, or long robe of black velvet, a marlota, or Moorish tunic of brocade, that reached to the feet, and scarlet stockings. His sword, superbly gilt, was girded to his side, as he used to wear it when in the field. Thus magnificently attired, the body was enclosed in a coffin, which was covered with black velvet, and decorated with a cross of white damask. It was then placed on a sumptuous bier, in the centre of the great hall of the palace.

Here the duchess made great lamentation over the body of her lord, in which she was joined by her train of damsels and attendants, as well as by the pages and esquires, and innumerable vassals of the marquis.

In the close of the evening, just before the "Ave Maria," the funeral train issued from the palace. Ten banners were borne around the bier, the particular trophies of the marquis, won from the Moors by his valour in individual enterprises, before King Ferdinand had commenced the war of Granada. The procession was swelled by an immense train of bishops, priests, and friars of different orders, together with the civil and military authorities, and all the chivalry of Seville; headed by the Count of Cifuentes, at that time intendente, or commander of the city. It moved slowly and solemnly through the streets, stopping occasionally, and chanting litanies and responses. Two hundred and forty waxen tapers shed a light like the day about the bier. The balconies and windows were crowded with ladies, who shed tears as the funeral train passed by: while the women of the lower classes were loud in their lamentations, as if bewailing the loss of a father or a brother. On approaching the convent of St. Augustine, the monks came forth with the cross and tapers, and eight censers, and conducted the body into the church, where it lay in state, until all the vigils were performed by the different orders, after which it was deposited in the family tomb of the Ponces in the same church, and the ten banners were suspended over the sepulchre.*

* Cura de los Palacios, c. 104.

His tomb, with the banners mouldering above it, remained for ages, an object of veneration with all who had read or heard of his virtues and achievements. In the year 1810, however, the chapel was sacked by the French, its altars overturned, and the sepulchres of the family of the Ponces shattered to pieces. The present Duchess of Benavente, the worthy descendant of this illustrious and heroic line, has since piously collected the ashes of her ancestors, restored the altar, and repaired the chapel. The sepulchres, however, were utterly destroyed, and an inscription of gold letters, on the wall of the chapel, to the right of the altar, is now all that denotes the place of sepulture of the brave Roderigo Ponce de Leon.

THE LEGEND OF THE DEATH OF DON ALONZO DE AGUILAR.

To such as feel an interest in the fortunes of the valiant Don Alonzo de Aguilar, the chosen friend and companion in arms of Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz, and one of the most distinguished heroes of the war of Granada, a few particulars of his remarkable fate will not be unacceptable. They are found among the manuscripts of the worthy Padre Fray Antonio Agapida, and appear to have been appended to his chronicle.

For several years after the conquest of Granada, the country remained feverish and unquiet. The zealous efforts of the Catholic clergy to effect the conversion of the infidels, and the pious coercion used for that purpose by government, exasperated the stubborn Moors of the mountains. Several zealous missionaries were maltreated, and, in the town of Dayrin, two of them were seized, and exhorted with many menaces, to embrace the Moslem faith. On their resolutely refusing they were killed with staffs and stones, by the Moorish women and children, and their bodies burnt to ashes.*

Upon this event, a body of Christian cavaliers assembled in Andalusia, to the number of eight hundred; and, without waiting for orders from the king, revenged the death of these martyrs, by plundering and laying waste the Moorish towns and villages. The Moors fled to the mountains, and their

* Cura de los Palacios, c. 165.

cause was espoused by many of their nation, who inhabited those rugged regions. The storm of rebellion began to gather, and mutter its thunders in the Alpuxarras. They were echoed from the Serrania of Ronda, ever ready for rebellion; but the strongest hold of the insurgents was in the Sierra Vermeja, or chain of red mountains, lying near the sea, the savage rocks and precipices of which may be seen from Gibraltar.

When King Ferdinand heard of these tumults, he issued a proclamation, ordering all the Moors of the insurgent regions to leave them within ten days, and repair to Castile: giving secret instructions, however, that those who should voluntarily embrace the Christian faith, might be permitted to remain. At the same time he ordered Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and the Counts of Ureña and Cifuentes, to march against the rebels.

Don Alonzo de Aguilar was at Cordova when he received the commands of the king. "What force is allotted us for this expedition?" said he. On being told, he perceived that the number of troops was far from adequate. "When a man is dead," said he, "we send four men into his house, to bring forth the body. We are now sent to chastise these Moors, who are alive, vigorous, in open rebellion, and ensconced in their castles; and they do not give us man to man." These words of the brave Alonzo de Aguilar were afterwards frequently repeated; but, though he saw the desperate nature of the enterprise, he did not hesitate to undertake it.

Don Alonzo was, at that time, in the fifty-first year of his age. He was a veteran warrior, in whom the fire of youth was yet unquenched, though tempered by experience. The greater part of his life had been passed in the camp and in the field, until danger was as his natural element. His muscular frame had acquired the firmness of iron, without the rigidity of age. His armour and weapons seemed to have become a part of his nature; and he sat like a man of steel on his powerful war horse.

He took with him, on this expedition, his son, Don Pedro de Cordova; a youth of bold and generous spirit, in the freshness of his days, and armed and arrayed with all the bravery of a young Spanish cavalier. When the populace of Cordova beheld the veteran father, the warrior of a thousand battles, leading forth his youthful son to the field, they be-

thought themselves of the family appellation. "Behold," cried they, "the eagle teaching his young to fly! Long live the valiant line of Aguilar!"*

The prowess of Don Alonzo and of his companions in arms was renowned throughout the Moorish towns. At their approach, therefore, numbers of the Moors submitted, and hastened to Ronda to embrace Christianity. Among the mountaineers, however, there were many of the Gandules, a fierce tribe from Africa, too proud of spirit to bend their necks to the yoke. At their head was a Moor, named El Feri of Ben Estepar, renowned for strength and courage. At his instigations, his followers gathered together their families and most precious effects; placed them on mules, and, driving before them their flocks and herds, abandoned their valleys, and retired up the craggy passes of the Sierra Vermeja. On the summit was a fertile plain, surrounded by rocks and precipices, which formed a natural fortress. Here El Feri placed all the women and children, and all the property. By his orders, his followers piled great stones on the rocks and cliffs, which commanded the defiles and the steep side of the mountain, and prepared to defend every pass that led to his place of refuge.

The Christian commanders arrived, and pitched their camp before the town of Monardo; a strong place, curiously fortified, and situated at the foot of the highest part of the Sierra Vermeja. Here they remained for several days, unable to compel a surrender. They were separated from the skirts of the mountain by a deep barranca or ravine, at the bottom of which flowed a small stream. The Moors, commanded by El Feri, drew down from their mountain height, and remained on the opposite side of the brook, to defend a pass which led up to their strong-hold.

One afternoon, a number of Christian soldiers, in mere bravado, seized a banner, crossed the brook, and, scrambling up the opposite bank, attacked the Moors. They were followed by numbers of their companions; some in aid, some in emulation, but most in hope of booty. A sharp action ensued on the mountain side. The Moors were greatly superior in number, and had the vantage ground. When the Counts of Ureña and Cifuentes beheld this skirmish, they asked Don Alonzo de Aguilar his opinion. "My opinion,"

* Aguilar, the Spanish for eagle.

said he, "was given at Cordova, and remains the same. This is a desperate enterprise. However, the Moors are at hand; and if they suspect weakness in us, it will increase their courage and our peril. Forward then to the attack, and I trust in God we shall gain a victory!" So saying, he led his troops into the battle.*

On the skirts of the mountains were several level places, like terraces. Here the Christians pressed valiantly upon the Moors, and had the advantage; but the latter retreated to the steep and craggy heights, from whence they hurled darts and rocks upon their assailants. They defended their passes and defiles with ferocious valour; but were driven from height to height, until they reached the plain on the summit of the mountain, where their wives and children were sheltered. Here they would have made a stand; but Alonzo de Aguilar, with his son Don Pedro, charged upon them at the head of three hundred men, and put them to flight, with dreadful carnage. While they were pursuing the flying enemy, the rest of the army, thinking the victory achieved, dispersed themselves over the little plain in search of plunder. They pursued the shrieking females, tearing off their necklaces, bracelets, and anklets of gold; and they found so much treasure of various kinds collected in this spot, that they threw by their armour and weapons, to load themselves with booty.

Evening was closing: the Christians, intent upon spoil, had ceased to pursue the Moors, and the latter were arrested in their flight by the cries of their wives and children. Their fierce leader, El Feri, threw himself before them. "Friends, soldiers," cried he, "whither do you fly? whither can you seek refuge, where the enemy cannot follow you? Your wives, your children, are behind you; turn and defend them: you have no chance for safety but from the weapons in your hands!"

The Moors turned at his words. They beheld the Christians scattered about the plain, many of them without armour, and all encumbered with spoil. "Now is the time," shouted El Feri; charge upon them while laden with your plunder! I will open a path for you!" He rushed to the attack, followed by his Moors, with shouts and cries, that echoed through the mountains. The scattered Christians were seized

* Bleda, lib. v. cap. 26.

with a panic, and, throwing down their booty, began to fly in all directions. Don Alonzo de Aguilar advanced his banner, and endeavoured to rally them. Finding his horse of no avail in these rocky heights, he dismounted, and caused his men to do the same. He had a small band of tried followers, with which he opposed a bold front to the Moors, calling on the scattered troops to rally in the rear.

Night had completely closed. It prevented the Moors from seeing the smallness of the force with which they were contending; and Don Alonzo and his cavaliers dealt their blows so vigorously, that, aided by the darkness, they seemed multiplied to ten times their number. Unfortunately, a small cask of gunpowder blew up near to the scene of action. It shed a momentary but brilliant light over all the plain, and on every rock and cliff. The Moors beheld with surprise that they were opposed by a mere handful of men, and that the greater part of the Christians were flying from the field. They put up loud shouts of triumph. While some continued the conflict with redoubled ardour, others pursued the fugitives, hurling after them stones and darts, and discharging showers of arrows. Many of the Christians, in their terror, and their ignorance of the mountains, rushed headlong from the brinks of precipices, and were dashed in pieces.

Don Alonzo de Aguilar still maintained his ground; but while a party of the Moors assailed him in front, others galled him with all kinds of missiles from the impending cliffs. Some of the cavaliers, seeing the hopeless nature of the conflict, proposed that they should abandon the height, and retreat down the mountain. "No," said Don Alonzo, proudly, "never did the banner of the house of Aguilar retreat one foot in the field of battle." He had scarcely uttered these words, when his son Don Pedro was stretched at his feet. A stone hurled from a cliff had struck out two of his teeth, and a lance passed quivering through his thigh. The youth attempted to rise, and, with one knee on the ground, to fight by the side of his father. Don Alonzo, finding him wounded, urged him to quit the field. "Fly, my son," said he. "Let us not put everything at venture upon one hazard: conduct thyself as a good Christian, and live to comfort and honour thy mother."

Don Pedro still refused to quit him; whereupon Don Alonzo ordered several of his followers to bear him off by

force. His friend, Don Francisco Alvarez, of Cordova, taking him in his arms, conveyed him to the quarters of the Count of Ureña, who had halted on the heights, at some distance from the scene of battle, for the purpose of rallying and succouring the fugitives. Almost at the same moment, the count beheld his own son, Don Pedro Giron, brought in grievously wounded.

In the meantime, Don Alonzo, with two hundred cavaliers, maintained the unequal contest. Surrounded by foes, they fell, one after another, like so many noble stags encircled by the hunters. Don Alonzo was the last survivor. He was without horse, and almost without armour; his corslet unlaced, and his bosom gashed with wounds. Still he kept a brave front towards the enemy, and retiring between two rocks, defended himself with such valour that the slain lay in a heap before him.

He was assailed in this retreat by a Moor of surpassing strength and fierceness. The contest was for some time doubtful; but Don Alonzo received a wound in the head, and another in the breast, that made him stagger. Closing and grappling with his foe, they had a desperate struggle, until the Christian cavalier, exhausted by his wounds, fell upon his back. He still retained his grasp upon his enemy. "Think not," cried he, "thou hast an easy prize; know that I am Don Alonzo, he of Aguilar!" "If thou art Don Alonzo," replied the Moor, "know that I am El Feri, of Ben Estepar!" They continued their deadly struggle, and both drew their daggers: but Don Alonzo was exhausted by seven ghastly wounds. While he was yet struggling, his heroic soul departed from his body, and he expired in the grasp of the Moor.

Thus fell Alonzo de Aguilar, the mirror of Andalusian chivalry; one of the most powerful grandees of Spain, for person, blood, estate, and office. For forty years he had waged successful wars upon the Moors: in childhood, by his household and retainers; in manhood, by the prowess of his arm, and the wisdom and valour of his spirit. His pennon had always been foremost in danger; he had been general of armies, viceroy of Andalusia, and the author of glorious enterprises, in which kings were vanquished and mighty alcaydes and warriors laid low. He had slain many Moslem chiefs with his own arm, and, among others, the renowned Ali Atar, of Loxa,

fighting foot to foot, on the banks of the Xenil. His judgment, discretion, magnanimity, and justice, vied with his prowess. He was the fifth lord of his warlike house, that fell in battle with the Moors. "His soul," observes Padre Abarca, "it is believed, ascended to heaven, to receive the reward of so Christian a captain: for that very day he had armed himself with the sacraments of confession and communion."*

The Moors, elated with their success, pursued the fugitive Christians down the defiles and sides of the mountains. It was with the utmost difficulty that the Count de Ureña could bring off a remnant of his forces from that disastrous height. Fortunately, on the lower slope of the mountain they found the rear-guard of the army, led by the Count de Cifuentes, who had crossed the brook and the ravine to come to their assistance. As the fugitives came flying in headlong terror down the mountain, it was with difficulty the count kept his own troops from giving way in panic, and retreating in confusion across the brook. He succeeded, however, in maintaining order, in rallying the fugitives, and checking the fury of the Moors. Then, taking his station on a rocky eminence, he maintained his post until morning, sometimes sustaining violent attacks, at other times rushing forth and making assaults upon the enemy. When morning dawned, the Moors ceased to combat, and drew up to the summit of the mountain.

It was then that the Christians had time to breathe, and to ascertain the dreadful loss they had sustained. Among the many valiant cavaliers who had fallen, was Don Francisco Ramirez of Madrid, who had been captain-general of artillery throughout the war of Granada, and contributed greatly, by his valour and ingenuity, to that renowned conquest. But all other griefs and cares were forgotten in anxiety for the fate of Don Alonzo de Aguilar. His son, Don Pedro de Cordova, had been brought off with great difficulty from the battle; and afterwards lived to be Marquis of Priego. But of Don Alonzo nothing was known, except that he was left with a handful of cavaliers, fighting valiantly against an overwhelming force. As the rising sun lighted up the red cliffs of the mountains, the soldiers watched with anxious eyes, if perchance his pennon might be descried, fluttering from any

* Abarca, Anales de Aragon, rey. xxx. cap. 2.

precipice or defile: but nothing of the kind was to be seen. The trumpet call was repeatedly sounded: but empty echoes alone replied. A silence reigned about the mountain summit, which showed that the deadly strife was over. Now and then a wounded warrior came, dragging his feeble steps from among the cliffs and rocks; but, on being questioned, he shook his head mournfully, and could tell nothing of the fate of his commander.

The tidings of this disastrous defeat, and of the perilous situation of the survivors, reached King Ferdinand at Granada. He immediately marched, at the head of all the chivalry of the court, to the mountains of Ronda. His presence, with a powerful force, soon put an end to the rebellion. A part of the Moors were suffered to ransom themselves, and to embark for Africa; others were made to embrace Christianity; and those of the town where the Christian missionaries had been massacred were sold as slaves. From the conquered Moors, the mournful but heroic end of Don Alonzo de Aguilar was ascertained. On the morning after the battle, when the Moors came to strip and bury the dead, the body of Don Alonzo was found among those of more than two hundred of his followers, many of them alcaydes and cavaliers of distinction. Though the person of Don Alonzo was well known to the Moors, being so distinguished among them, both in peace and war, yet it was so covered and disfigured with wounds, that it could with difficulty be recognised. They preserved it with care, and, on making their submission, delivered it up to King Ferdinand. It was conveyed with great state to Cordova, amidst the tears and lamentations of all Andalusia. When the funeral train entered Cordova, and the inhabitants saw the coffin containing the remains of their favourite hero, and the war horse, led in mournful trappings, on which they had so lately seen him sally forth from their gates, there was a general burst of grief throughout the city. The body was interred with great pomp and solemnity in the church of St. Hypolito. Many years afterwards, his grand-daughter, Doña Catalina of Aguilar and Cordova, Marchioness of Priego, caused his tomb to be altered. On examining the body, the head of a lance was found among the bones, received, without doubt, among the wounds of his last mortal combat. The name of this accomplished and Christian cavalier has ever remained a popular theme of the chronicler and poet; and is

endeared to the public memory by many of the historical ballads and songs of his country. For a long time the people of Cordova were indignant at the brave Count de Ureña, who, they thought, had abandoned Don Alonzo in his extremity; but the Castilian monarch acquitted him of all charge of the kind, and continued him in honour and office. It was proved that neither he nor his people could succour Don Alonzo, or even know of his peril, from the darkness of the night. There is a mournful little Spanish ballad or romance, which breathes the public grief on this occasion, and the populace, on the return of the Count de Ureña to Cordova, assailed him with one of its plaintive and reproachful verses:

"Decid Conde de Ureña,
Don Alonzo donde queda?"*

Count Ureña! Count Ureña!
Tell us, where is Don Alonzo?

* Bleda, lib. v. cap. 26.

LEGENDS

OF THE

CONQUEST OF SPAIN.

PREFACE

TO THE LEGENDS OF THE CONQUEST OF SPAIN.

Few events in history have been so signal and striking in their main circumstances, and so overwhelming and enduring in their consequences, as that of the conquest of Spain by the Saracens; yet there are few where the motives, characters, and actions of the agents have been enveloped in more doubt and contradiction. As in the memorable story of the fall of Troy, we have to make out as well as we can, the veritable details through the mists of poetic fiction; yet poetry has so combined itself with, and lent its magic colouring to, every fact, that to strip it away, would be to reduce the story to a meagre skeleton, and rob it of all its charms. The storm of Moslem invasion that swept so suddenly over the peninsula, silenced for a time the faint voice of the Muse, and drove the sons of learning from their cells. The pen was thrown aside to grasp the sword and [illegible]; and men were too much taken up with battling against tunes in His conduct [illegible]ich beset them on every side, to find time or inclinati[illegible] record them.

When the nation had recovered in some degree from the effects of this astounding blow, or rather, had become accustomed to the tremendous reverse which it produced, and sage men sought to inquire and write the particulars, it was too late to ascertain them in their exact verity. The gloom and melancholy that had overshadowed the land, had given birth to a thousand superstitious fancies: the woes and terrors of the past were clothed with supernatural miracles and portents, and the actors in the fearful drama had already assumed the dubious characteristics of romance. Or if a writer from among the conquerors undertook to touch upon the theme, it was embellished with all the wild extravagances of an oriental imagination; which afterwards stole into the graver works of the monkish historians.

Hence the earliest chronicles which treat of the downfall of Spain are apt to be tinctured with those saintly miracles which savour of the pious labours of the cloister, or those fanciful fictions that betray their Arabian authors. Yet from these apocryphal sources, the most legitimate and accredited Spanish histories have taken their rise, as pure rivers may be traced up to the fens and mantled pools of a morass.

It is true, the authors, with cautious discrimination, have discarded those particulars too startling for belief, and have culled only such as, from their probability and congruity, might be safely recorded as historical facts; yet scarce one of these but has been connected in the original with some romantic fiction, and, even in its divorced state, bears traces of its former alliance.

To discard, however, everything wild and marvellous in this portion of Spanish history, is to discard some of its most beautiful, instructive, and national features; it is to judge of Spain by the standard of probability suited to tamer and more prosaic countries. Spain is virtually a land of poetry and romance, where every-day life partakes of adventure, and where the least agitation or excitement carries every thing up into extravagant enterprise and daring exploit. The Spaniards, in all ages, have been of swelling and braggart spirit, soaring in thought, pompous in word, and valiant, though vainglorious [illegible] deed. Their heroic aims have transcended the coo[illegible]ions of their neighbours, and their reckless dari[illegible]rne them on to achievements which prudent enterprise could never have accomplished. Since the time, too, of the conquest and occupation of their country by the Arabs, a strong infusion of oriental magnificence has entered into the national character, and rendered the Spaniard distinct from every other nation of Europe.

In the following pages, therefore, the author has ventured to dip more deeply into the enchanted fountains of old Spanish chronicle, than has usually been done by those who, in modern times, have treated of the eventful period of the conquest; but, in so doing, he trusts he will illustrate more fully the character of the people and the times. He has thought proper to throw these records into the form of legends, not claiming for them the authenticity of sober history, yet giving nothing that has not historical foundation. All the facts herein contained, however extravagant some of them may be deemed, will be found in the works of sage and reverend chroniclers of yore, growing side by side with long acknowledged truths, and might be supported by learned and imposing references in the margin.

CONTENTS

OF THE LEGENDS OF THE CONQUEST OF SPAIN.

Page

CONTENTS.

THE LEGEND OF DON RODERICK.*

CHAPTER I.

SPAIN, or Iberia, as it was called in ancient days, has been a country harrassed from the earliest times by the invader. The Celts, the Greeks, the Phœnicians, the Carthaginians, by turns, or simultaneously, infringed its territories, drove the native Iberians from their rightful homes, and established colonies and founded cities in the land. It subsequently fell into the all-grasping power of Rome, remaining for some time a subjugated province; and when that gigantic empire crumbled into pieces, the Suevi, the Alani, and the Vandals, those barbarians of the north, overran and ravaged this devoted country, and portioned out the soil among them.

Their sway was not of long duration. In the fifth century the Goths, who were then the allies of Rome, undertook the reconquest of Iberia, and succeeded, after a desperate struggle of three years' duration. They drove before them the barbarous hordes, their predecessors; intermarried and incorporated themselves with the original inhabitants, and founded a powerful and splendid empire, comprising the Iberian peninsula, the ancient Narbonnaise, afterwards called Gallia Gotica, or Gothic Gaul, and a part of the African coast called Tingitania. A new nation was, in a manner, produced by this mixture of the Goths and Iberians. Sprung from a union of warrior races, reared and nurtured amidst the din of arms, the Gothic Spaniards, if they may so be termed, were a warlike, unquiet, yet high-minded and heroic people. Their simple and abstemious habits, their contempt for toil and suffering, and their love of daring enterprise, fitted them for a soldier's life. So addicted were they to war, that when they had no external foes to contend with, they fought with one another; and when engaged in battle, says an old chro-

* Many of the facts in this legend are taken from an old chronicle, written in quaint and antiquated Spanish, and professing to be a translation from the Arabian chronicle of the Moor Rasis, by Mohammed, a Moslem writer, and Gil Parez, a Spanish priest. It is supposed to be a piece of literary mosaic work, made up from both Spanish and Arabian chronicles: yet from this work most of the Spanish historians have drawn their particulars relative to the fortunes of Don Roderick.

nicler, the very thunders and lightnings of heaven could not separate them.*

For two centuries and a half the Gothic power remained unshaken, and the sceptre was wielded by twenty-five successive kings. The crown was elective, in a council of palatines, composed of the bishops and nobles; who, while they swore allegiance to the newly-made sovereign, bound him by a reciprocal oath to be faithful to his trust. Their choice was made from among the people, subject only to one condition—that the king should be of pure Gothic blood. But though the crown was elective in principle, it gradually became hereditary from usage, and the power of the sovereign grew to be almost absolute. The king was commander-in-chief of the armies; the whole patronage of the kingdom was in his hands; he summoned and dissolved the national councils; he made and revoked laws according to his pleasure; and, having ecclesiastical supremacy, he exercised a sway even over the consciences of his subjects.

The Goths, at the time of their inroad, were stout adherents to the Arian doctrines, but after a time they embraced the Catholic faith, which was maintained by the native Spaniards free from many of the gross superstitions of the church at Rome; and this unity of faith contributed more than anything else to blend and harmonise the two races into one. The bishops and other clergy were exemplary in their lives, and aided to promote the influence of the laws and maintain the authority of the state. The fruits of regular and secure government were manifest in the advancement of agriculture, commerce, and the peaceful arts, and in the increase of wealth, luxury, and refinement; but there was a gradual decline of the simple, hardy, and warlike habits that had distinguished the nation in its semi-barbarous days.

Such was the state of Spain when, in the year of Redemption 701, Witiza was elected to the Gothic throne. The beginning of his reign gave promise of happy days to Spain. He redressed grievances, moderated the tributes of his subjects, and conducted himself with mingled mildness and energy in the administration of the laws. In a little while, however, he threw off the mask, and showed himself in his true nature, cruel and luxurious.

Two of his relatives, sons of a preceding king, awakened his

* Florian de Ocampo, lib. iii. cap. 12. Justin Abrev. Trog. Pomp. lib. xliv. Bleda. Cronica, lib. ii. cap. 3.

jealousy for the security of his throne. One of them, named Favila, Duke of Cantabria, he put to death, and would have inflicted the same fate upon his son, Pelayo, but that the youth was beyond his reach, being preserved by Providence for the future salvation of Spain. The other object of his suspicion was Theodofredo, who lived retired from court. The violence of Witiza reached him even in his retirement. His eyes were put out, and he was immured within a castle at Cordova. Roderick, the youthful son of Theodofredo, escaped to Italy, where he received protection from the Romans.

Witiza, now considering himself secure upon the throne, gave the reins to his licentious passions, and soon, by his tyranny and sensuality, acquired the appellation of Witiza the Wicked. Despising the old Gothic continence, and yielding to the example of the sect of Mahomet, which suited his lascivious temperament, he indulged in a plurality of wives and concubines, encouraging his subjects to do the same. Nay, he even sought to gain the sanction of the church to his excesses; promulgating a law by which the clergy were released from their vows of celibacy, and permitted to marry and to entertain paramours.

The sovereign pontiff Constantine threatened to depose and excommunicate him unless he abrogated this licentious law; but Witiza set him at defiance, threatening, like his Gothic predecessor, Alaric, to assail the eternal city with his troops, and make spoil of her accumulated treasures.* "We will adorn our damsels," said he, "with the jewels of Rome, and replenish our coffers from the mint of St. Peter."

Some of the clergy opposed themselves to the innovating spirit of the monarch, and endeavoured, from the pulpits, to rally the people to the pure doctrines of their faith; but they were deposed from their sacred office, and banished as seditious mischief-makers. The church of Toledo continued refractory; the archbishop Sindaredo, it is true, was disposed to accommodate himself to the corruptions of the times, but the prebendaries battled intrepidly against the new laws of the monarch, and stood manfully in defence of their vows of chastity. "Since the church of Toledo will not yield itself to our will," said Witiza, "it shall have two husbands." So saying, he appointed his own brother Oppas, at that time Archbishop of Seville, to take a seat with Sindaredo in the

* Chron. de Luitprando, 709. Abarca Anales de Aragon (el Mahometismo, fol. 5).

episcopal chair of Toledo, and made him Primate of Spain. He was a priest after his own heart, and seconded him in all his profligate abuses.

It was in vain the denunciations of the church were fulminated from the chair of St. Peter; Witiza threw off all allegiance to the Roman pontiff, threatening with pain of death those who should obey the papal mandates. "We will suffer no foreign ecclesiastic with triple crown," said he, "to domineer over our dominions."

The Jews had been banished from the country during the preceding reign, but Witiza permitted them to return, and even bestowed upon their synagogues privileges of which he had despoiled the churches. The children of Israel, ever since the time when they borrowed the jewels of gold and the jewels of silver from their neighbours on preparing for their memorable flight out of Egypt, have been curious dealers in gold, and silver, and precious stones; on this occasion, therefore, they were enabled, it is said, to repay the monarch for his protection by bags of money and caskets of sparkling gems, the rich product of their oriental commerce.

The kingdom at this time enjoyed external peace, but there were symptoms of internal discontent. Witiza took the alarm; he remembered the ancient turbulence of the nation, and its proneness to internal feuds. Issuing secret orders, therefore, in all directions, he dismantled most of the cities, and demolished the castles and fortresses that might serve as rallying points for the factious. He disarmed the people also, and converted the weapons of war into the implements of peace. It seemed, in fact, as if the millenium were dawning upon the land; for the sword was beaten into a ploughshare, and the spear into a pruning hook.

While thus the ancient martial fire of the nation was extinguished, its morals likewise were corrupted. The altars were abandoned, the churches closed, wide disorder and sensuality prevailed throughout the land; so that, according to the old chroniclers, within the compass of a few short years, "Witiza the Wicked taught all Spain to sin."

CHAPTER II.

Woe to the ruler who founds his hope of sway on the weakness or corruption of the people! The very measures taken by Witiza to perpetuate his power ensured his down-

fall. While the whole nation under his licentious rule, was sinking into vice and effeminacy, and the arm of war was unstrung, the youthful Roderick, son of Theodofredo, was training up for action in the stern but wholesome school of adversity. He instructed himself in the use of arms; became adroit and vigorous by varied exercises; learned to despise all danger; and inured himself to hunger and watchfulness, and the rigour of the seasons.

His merits and misfortunes procured him many friends among the Romans; and when, being arrived at a fitting age, he undertook to revenge the wrongs of his father and his kindred, a host of brave and hardy soldiers flocked to his standard. With these he made his sudden appearance in Spain. The friends of his house, and the disaffected of all classes, hastened to join him; and he advanced rapidly, and without opposition, through an unarmed and enervated land.

Witiza saw too late the evil he had brought upon himself. He made a hasty levy, and took the field with a scantily equipped and undisciplined host, but was easily routed and made prisoner, and the whole kingdom submitted to Don Roderick.

The ancient city of Toledo, the royal residence of the Gothic kings, was the scene of high festivity and solemn ceremonial on the coronation of the victor. Whether he was elected to the throne according to the Gothic usage, or seized it by the right of conquest, is a matter of dispute among historians; but all agree that the nation submitted cheerfully to his sway, and looked forward to prosperity and happiness under their newly elevated monarch. His appearance and character seemed to justify the anticipation. He was in the splendour of youth, and of a majestic presence. His soul was bold and daring, and elevated by lofty desires. He had a sagacity that penetrated the thoughts of men, and a magnificent spirit that won all hearts. Such is the picture which ancient writers give of Don Roderick, when, with all the stern and simple virtues unimpaired which he had acquired in adversity and exile, and flushed with the triumph of a pious revenge, he ascended the Gothic throne.

Prosperity, however, is the real touchstone of the human heart. No sooner did Roderick find himself in possession of the crown, than the love of power, and the jealousy of rule, were awakened in his breast. His first measure was against

Witiza, who was brought in chains into his presence. Roderick beheld the captive monarch with an unpitying eye, remembering only his wrongs and cruelties to his father. "Let the evils he has inflicted on others be visited upon his own head," said he: "as he did unto Theodofredo, even so be it done unto him." So the eyes of Witiza were put out, and he was thrown into the same dungeon at Cordova in which Theodofredo had languished. There he passed the brief remnant of his days, in perpetual darkness, a prey to wretchedness and remorse.

Roderick now cast an uneasy and suspicious eye upon Evan and Sisburto, the two sons of Witiza. Fearful lest they should foment some secret rebellion, he banished them the kingdom. They took refuge in the Spanish dominions in Africa, where they were received and harboured by Requila, governor of Tangier, out of gratitude for favours which he had received from their late father. There they remained, to brood over their fallen fortunes, and to aid in working out the future woes of Spain.

Their uncle Oppas, bishop of Seville, who had been made co partner, by Witiza, in the arch-episcopal chair at Toledo, would have likewise fallen under the suspicion of the king; but he was a man of consummate art and vast exterior sanctity, and won upon the good graces of the monarch. He was suffered, therefore, to retain his sacred office at Seville; but the see of Toledo was given in charge to the venerable Urbino; and the law of Witiza was revoked, that dispensed the clergy from their vows of celibacy.

The jealousy of Roderick for the security of his crown was soon again aroused, and his measures were prompt and severe. Having been informed that the governors of certain castles and fortresses in Castile and Andalusia had conspired against him, he caused them to be put to death, and their strong-holds to be demolished. He now went on to imitate the pernicious policy of his predecessor; throwing down walls and towers, disarming the people, and thus incapacitating them from rebellion. A few cities were permitted to retain their fortifications, but these were intrusted to alcaydes, in whom he had especial confidence: the greater part of the kingdom was left defenceless. The nobles, who had been roused to temporary manhood during the recent stir of war, sunk back into the inglorious state of inaction which had disgraced

them during the reign of Witiza, passing their time in feasting, and dancing to the sound of loose and wanton minstrelsy.* It was scarcely possible to recognise, in these idle wassailers and soft voluptuaries, the descendants of the stern and frugal warriors of the frozen north; who had braved flood and mountain, and heat and cold, and had battled their way to empire across half a world in arms.

They surrounded their youthful monarch, it is true, with a blaze of military pomp. Nothing could surpass the splendour of their arms, which were embossed and enamelled, and enriched with gold and jewels and curious devices; nothing could be more gallant and glorious than their array—it was all plume and banner and silken pageantry, the gorgeous trappings for tilt and tourney and courtly revel; but the iron soul of war was wanting.

How rare it is to learn wisdom from the misfortunes of others! With the fate of Witiza full before his eyes, Don Roderick indulged in the same pernicious errors, and was doomed, in like manner to prepare the way for his own perdition.

CHAPTER III.

As yet the heart of Roderick, occupied by the struggles of his early life, by warlike enterprises, and by the inquietudes of newly-gotten power, had been insensible to the charms of women; but in the present voluptuous calm the amorous propensities of his nature assumed their sway. There are divers accounts of the youthful beauty who first found favour in his eyes, and was elevated by him to the throne. We follow, in our legend, the details of an Arabian chronicler,† authenticated by a Spanish poet.‡ Let those who dispute our facts produce better authority for their contradiction.

Among the few fortified places that had not been dismantled by Don Roderick was the ancient city of Denia, situated on the Mediterranean coast, and defended on a rock-built castle that overlooked the sea.

The alcayde of the castle, with many of the people of Denia, was one day on his knees in the chapel, imploring the

* Mariana. Hist. Esp. lib. vi. c. 21.

† Perdida de España pour Abulcacim Tarif Abentarique, lib. i.

‡ Lope de Vega.

Virgin to allay a tempest which was strewing the coast with wrecks, when a sentinel brought word that a Moorish cruizer was standing for the land. The alcayde gave orders to ring the alarm bells, light signal fires on the hill-tops, and rouse the country; for the coast was subject to cruel maraudings from the Barbary cruizers.

In a little while the horsemen of the neighbourhood were seen pricking along the beach, armed with such weapons as they could find; and the alcayde and his scanty garrison descended from the hill. In the meantime the Moorish bark came rolling and pitching towards the land. As it drew near, the rich carving and gilding with which it was decorated, its silken bandaroles, and banks of crimson oars, showed it to be no warlike vessel, but a sumptuous galleot, destined for state and ceremony. It bore the marks of the tempest: the masts were broken, the oars shattered, and fragments of snowy sails and silken awnings were fluttering in the blast.

As the galleot grounded upon the sand, the impatient rabble rushed into the surf to capture and make spoil; but were awed into admiration and respect by the appearance of the illustrious company on board. There were Moors of both sexes sumptuously arrayed, and adorned with precious jewels, bearing the demeanour of persons of lofty rank. Among them shone conspicuous a youthful beauty, magnificently attired to whom all seemed to pay reverence.

Several of the Moors surrounded her with drawn swords, threatening death to any that approached; others, sprang from the bark, and throwing themselves on their knees before the alcayde, implored him, by his honour and courtesy as a knight, to protect a royal virgin from injury and insult.

"You behold before you," said they, "the only daughter of the King of Algiers, the betrothed bride of the son of the King of Tunis. We were conducting her to the court of her expecting bridegroom, when a tempest drove us from our course, and compelled us to take refuge on your coast. Be not more cruel than the tempest, but deal nobly with that which even sea and storm have spared."

The alcayde listened to their prayers. He conducted the princess and her train to the castle, where every honour due to her rank was paid her. Some of her ancient attendants interceded for her liberation, promising countless sums to be paid

by her father for her ransom; but the alcayde turned a deaf ear to all their golden offers. "She is a royal captive," said he; "it belongs to my sovereign alone to dispose of her." After she had reposed, therefore, for some days at the castle, and recovered from the fatigue and terror of the seas, he caused her to be conducted, with all her train, in magnificent state to the court of Don Roderick.

The beautiful Elyata* entered Toledo more like a triumphant sovereign than a captive. A chosen band of Christian horsemen, splendidly armed, appeared to wait upon her as a mere guard of honour. She was surrounded by the Moorish damsels of her train, and followed by her own Moslem guards, all attired with the magnificence that had been intended to grace her arrival at the court of Tunis. The princess was arrayed in bridal robes, woven in the most costly looms of the orient; her diadem sparkled with diamonds, and was decorated with the rarest plumes of the bird of paradise; and even the silken trappings of her palfrey, which swept the ground, were covered with pearls and precious stones. As this brilliant cavalcade crossed the bridge of the Tagus, all Toledo poured forth to behold it; and nothing was heard throughout the city but praises of the wonderful beauty of the princess of Algiers. King Roderick came forth, attended by the chivalry of his court, to receive the royal captive. His recent voluptuous life had disposed him for tender and amorous affections, and, at the first sight of the beautiful Elyata, he was enraptured with her charms. Seeing her face clouded with sorrow and anxiety, he soothed her with gentle and courteous words, and, conducting her to a royal palace, "Behold," said he, "thy habitation, where no one shall molest thee; consider thyself at home in the mansion of thy father, and dispose of anything according to thy will."

Here the princess passed her time, with the female attendants who had accompanied her from Algiers; and no one but the king was permitted to visit her, who daily became more and more enamoured of his lovely captive, and sought, by tender assiduity, to gain her affections. The distress of the princess at her captivity was soothed by this gentle treatment. She was of an age when sorrow cannot long hold sway over the heart. Accompanied by her youthful attendants, she ranged the spacious apartments of the palace, and sported

* By some she is called Zara.

among the groves and alleys of its garden. Every day the remembrance of the paternal home grew less and less painful, and the king became more and more amiable in her eyes; and when, at length, he offered to share his heart and throne with her, she listened with downcast looks and kindling blushes, but with an air of resignation.

One obstacle remained to the complete fruition of the monarch's wishes, and this was the religion of the princess. Roderick forthwith employed the Archbishop of Toledo to instruct the beautiful Elyata in the mysteries of the Christian faith. The female intellect is quick in perceiving the merits of new doctrines: the archbishop, therefore, soon succeeded in converting, not merely the princess, but most of her attendants; and a day was appointed for their public baptism. The ceremony was performed with great pomp and solemnity, in the presence of all the nobility and chivalry of the court. The princess and her damsels, clad in white, walked on foot to the cathedral, while numerous beautiful children, arrayed as angels, strewed the path with flowers; and the archbishop, meeting them at the portal, received them, as it were, into the bosom of the church. The princess abandoned her Moorish appellation of Elyata and was baptised by the name of Exilona, by which she was thenceforth called, and has generally been known in history.

The nuptials of Roderick and the beautiful convert took place shortly afterwards, and were celebrated with great magnificence. There were jousts, and tourneys, and banquets, and other rejoicings, which lasted twenty days, and were attended by the principal nobles from all parts of Spain. After these were over, such of the attendants of the princess as refused to embrace Christianity, and desired to return to Africa, were dismissed with munificent presents; and an embassy was sent to the king of Algiers, to inform him of the nuptials of his daughter, and to proffer him the friendship of King Roderick*.

* "Como esta Infanta era muy hermosa, y el Rey [Don Rodrigo] dispuesta y gentil hombre, entro por medio el amor y aficion, y junto con el regalo a que la avia mandado hospedar y servir fue causa que el rey persuadio a la Infanta, que si se tornava a su ley de Christiano la tomaria por muger y que la haria señora de sus Reynos. Con esta persuasion ella fue contenta, y aviendose vuelto Christiana, se caso con ella, y se celebraron las bodas con muchas fiestas y regozijos, como era razon."—*Abulcasim, Conq'st de Espan*, cap 3.

CHAPTER IV.

For a time Don Roderick lived happily with his young and beautiful queen, and Toledo was the seat of festivity and splendour. The principal nobles throughout the kingdom repaired to his court to pay him homage, and to receive his commands; and none were more devoted in their reverence than those who were obnoxious to suspicion, from their connexion with the late king.

Among the foremost of these was Count Julian, a man destined to be infamously renowned in the dark story of his country's woes. He was of one of the proudest Gothic families, lord of Consuegra and Algeziras, and connected by marriage with Witiza and the Bishop Oppas; his wife, the Countess Frandina, being their sister. In consequence of this connexion, and of his own merits, he had enjoyed the highest dignities and commands, being one of the Espatorios, or royal sword-bearers: an office of the greatest confidence about the person of the sovereign.* He had, moreover, been intrusted with the military government of the Spanish possessions on the African coast of the strait, which at that time were threatened by the Arabs of the East, the followers of Mahomet, who were advancing their victorious standard to the extremity of Western Africa. Count Julian established his seat of government at Ceuta, the frontier bulwark, and one of the far-famed gates of the Mediterranean Sea. Here he boldly faced, and held in check, the torrent of Moslem invasion.

Don Julian was a man of an active, but irregular genius, and a grasping ambition; he had a love for power and grandeur, in which he was joined by his haughty countess; and they could ill brook the downfall of their house as threatened by the fate of Witiza. They had hastened, therefore, to pay their court to the newly elevated monarch, and to assure him of their fidelity to his interests.

Roderick was readily persuaded of the sincerity of Count Julian; he was aware of his merits as a soldier and a governor,

* Condes Espatorios; so called from the drawn swords of ample size and breadth, with which they kept guard in the antechambers of the Gothic kings. Comes Spathariorum, custodum corporis Regis Profectus. Hunc et Propospatharium appellatum existimo.—*Patr. Pant. de Offic. Goth.*

and continued him in his important command; honouring him with many other marks of implicit confidence. Count Julian sought to confirm this confidence by every proof of devotion. It was a custom among the Goths to rear many of the children of the most illustrious families of the royal household. They served as pages to the king, and handmaids and ladies of honour to the queen, and were instructed in all manner of accomplishments befitting their gentle blood. When about to depart for Ceuta, to resume his command, Don Julian brought his daughter Florinda to present her to the sovereigns. She was a beautiful virgin, that had not as yet attained to womanhood. "I confide her to your protection," said he to the king, "to be unto her as a father; and to have her trained in the paths of virtue. I can leave with you no dearer pledge of my loyalty."

King Roderick received the timid and blushing maiden into his paternal care; promising to watch over her happiness with a parent's eye, and that she should be enrolled among the most cherished attendants of the queen. With this assurance of the welfare of his child, Count Julian departed, well pleased, for his government at Ceuta.

CHAPTER V.

The beautiful daughter of Count Julian was received with great favour by the queen Exilona, and admitted among the noble damsels that attended upon her person. Here she lived in honour and apparent security, and surrounded by innocent delights. To gratify his queen, Don Roderick had built for her rural recreation a palace without the walls of Toledo, on the banks of the Tagus. It stood in the midst of a garden, adorned after the luxurious style of the East. The air was perfumed by fragrant shrubs and flowers; the groves resounded with the song of the nightingale: while the gush of fountains and waterfalls, and the distant murmur of the Tagus, made it a delightful retreat during the sultry days of summer. The charm of perfect privacy also reigned throughout the place; for the garden walls were high, and numerous guards kept watch without to protect it from all intrusion.

In this delicious abode, more befitting an oriental voluptuary than a Gothic king, Don Roderick was accustomed to

while away much of that time which should have been devoted to the toilsome cares of government. The very security and peace which he had produced throughout his dominions, by his precautions to abolish the means and habitudes of war, had effected a disastrous change in his character. The hardy and heroic qualities which had conducted him to the throne, were softened in the lap of indulgence. Surrounded by the pleasures of an idle and effeminate court, and beguiled by the example of his degenerate nobles, he gave way to a fatal sensuality that had lain dormant in his nature during the virtuous days of his adversity. The mere love of female beauty had first enamoured him of Exilona; and the same passion, fostered by voluptuous idleness, now betrayed him into the commission of an act fatal to himself and Spain. The following is the story of his error, as gathered from an old chronicle and legend.

In a remote part of the palace was an apartment devoted to the queen. It was like an eastern harem, shut up from the foot of man, and where the king himself but rarely entered. It had its own courts, and gardens, and fountains, where the queen was wont to recreate herself with her damsels, as she had been accustomed to do in the jealous privacy of her father's palace.

One sultry day, the king, instead of taking his siesta, or mid-day slumber, repaired to this apartment to seek the society of the queen. In passing through a small oratory, he was drawn by the sound of female voices to a casement overhung with myrtles and jasmines. It looked into an interior garden or court, set out with orange trees, in the midst of which was a marble fountain, surrounded by a grassy bank, enamelled with flowers.

It was the high noontide of a summer day, when, in sultry Spain, the landscape trembles to the eye, and all nature seeks repose, except the grasshopper, that pipes his lulling note to the herdsman as he sleeps beneath the shade.

Around the fountain were several of the damsels of the queen, who, confident of the sacred privacy of the place, were yielding in that cool retreat to the indulgence prompted by the season and the hour. Some lay asleep on the flowery bank; others sat on the margin of the fountain, talking and laughing, as they bathed their feet in its limpid waters, and

King Roderick beheld delicate limbs shining through the wave, that might rival the marble in whiteness.

Among the damsels was one who had come from the Barbary coast with the queen. Her complexion had the dark tinge of Mauritania, but it was clear and transparent, and the deep rich rose blushed through the lovely brown. Her eyes were black and full of fire, and flashed from under long silken eyelashes.

A sportive contest arose among the maidens as to the comparative beauty of the Spanish and Moorish forms; but the Mauritanian damsel revealed limbs of voluptuous symmetry that seemed to defy all rivalry.

The Spanish beauties were on the point of giving up the contest, when they bethought themselves of the young Florinda, the daughter of Count Julian, who lay on the grassy bank, abandoned to a summer slumber. The soft glow of youth and health mantled on her cheek; her fringed eyelashes scarcely covered their sleeping orbs; her moist and ruby lips were lightly parted, just revealing a gleam of her ivory teeth; while her innocent bosom rose and fell beneath her boddice, like the gentle swelling and sinking of a tranquil sea. There was a breathing tenderness and beauty in the sleeping virgin, that seemed to send forth sweetness like the flowers around her.

"Behold," cried her companions, exultingly, "the champion of Spanish beauty!"

In their playful eagerness they half disrobed the innocent Florinda before she was aware. She awoke in time, however, to escape from their busy hands; but enough of her charms had been revealed to convince the monarch that they were not to be rivalled by the rarest beauties of Mauritania.

From this day the heart of Roderick was inflamed with a fatal passion. He gazed on the beautiful Florinda with fervid desire, and sought to read in her looks whether there was levity or wantonness in her bosom; but the eye of the damsel ever sunk beneath his gaze, and remained bent on the earth in virgin modesty.

It was in vain he called to mind the sacred trust reposed in him by Count Julian, and the promise he had given to watch over his daughter with paternal care; his heart was vitiated by sensual indulgence, and the consciousness of power had rendered him selfish in his gratifications.

Being one evening in the garden where the queen was diverting herself with her damsels, and coming to the fountain where he had beheld the innocent maidens at their sport, he could no longer restrain the passion that raged within his breast. Seating himself beside the fountain, he called Florinda to him to draw forth a thorn which had pierced his hand. The maiden knelt at his feet to examine his hand, and the touch of her slender fingers thrilled through his veins. As she knelt, too, her amber locks fell in rich ringlets about her beautiful head, her innocent bosom palpitated beneath the crimson boddice, and her timid blushes increased the effulgence of her charms.

Having examined the monarch's hand in vain, she looked up in his face with artless perplexity.

"Senior," said she, "I can find no thorn, nor any sign of wound."

Don Roderick grasped her hand, and pressed it to his heart. "It is here, lovely Florinda;" said he. "It is here! and thou alone can pluck it forth!"

"My Lord!" exclaimed the blushing and astonished maiden.

"Florinda!" said Don Roderick, "dost thou love me?"

"Senior," said she, "my father taught me to love and reverence you. He confided me to your care as one who would be as a parent to me, when he should be far distant, serving your majesty with life and loyalty. May God incline your majesty ever to protect me as a father!" So saying, the maiden dropped her eyes to the ground, and continued kneeling; but her countenance had become deadly pale, and as she knelt she trembled.

"Florinda," said the king, "either thou dost not or thou wilt not understand me. I would have thee love me, not as a father, nor as a monarch, but as one who adores thee. Why dost thou start? No one shall know our loves; and, moreover, the love of a monarch inflicts no degradation like the love of a common man—riches and honours attend upon it. I will advance thee to rank and dignity, and place thee above the proudest females of my court. Thy father, too, shall be more exalted and endowed than any noble in my realm."

The soft eye of Florinda kindled at these words. "Senior," said she, "the line I spring from can receive no dignity by means so vile; and my father would rather die than purchase

rank and power by the dishonour of his child. But I see," continued she, "that your majesty speaks in this manner only to try me. You may have thought me light and simple, and unworthy to attend upon the queen. I pray your majesty to pardon me, that I have taken your pleasantry in such serious part."

In this way the agitated maiden sought to evade the address of the monarch; but still her cheek was blanched, and her lip quivered as she spake.

The king pressed her hand to his lips with fervour. "May ruin seize me," cried he, "if I speak to prove thee! My heart, my kingdom are at thy command. Only be mine, and thou shalt rule absolute mistress of myself and my domains."

The damsel rose from the earth where she had hitherto knelt, and her whole countenance glowed with virtuous indignation. "My lord," said she, "I am your subject, and in your power; take my life if it be your pleasure; but nothing shall tempt me to commit a crime which would be treason to the queen, disgrace to my father, agony to my mother, and perdition to myself." With these words she left the garden, and the king, for the moment, was too much awed by her indignant virtue to oppose her departure.

We shall pass briefly over the succeeding events of the story of Florinda, about which so much has been said and sung by chronicler and bard: for the sober page of history should be carefully chastened from all scenes that might inflame a wanton imagination; leaving them to poems, and romances, and such-like highly seasoned works of fantasy and recreation.

Let it suffice to say, that Don Roderick pursued his suit to the beautiful Florinda, his passion being more and more inflamed by the resistance of the virtuous damsel. At length, forgetting what was due to helpless beauty, to his own honour as a knight, and his word as a sovereign, he triumphed over her weakness by base and unmanly violence.

There are not wanting those who affirm that the hapless Florinda lent a yielding ear to the solicitations of the monarch, and her name has been treated with opprobrium in several of the ancient chronicles and legendary ballads that have transmitted, from generation to generation, the story of the woes of Spain. In very truth, however, she appears to have been a

guiltless victim, resisting, as far as helpless female could resist, the arts and intrigues of a powerful monarch, who had nought to check the indulgence of his will, and bewailing her disgrace with a poignancy that shows how dearly she had prized her honour.

In the first paroxysm of her grief she wrote a letter to her father, blotted with her tears, and almost incoherent from her agitation. "Would to God, my father," said she, "that the earth had opened and swallowed me ere I had been reduced to write these lines! I blush to tell thee what it is not proper to conceal. Alas, my father! thou hast intrusted thy lamb to the guardianship of the lion. Thy daughter has been dishonoured, the royal cradle of the Goths polluted, and our lineage insulted and disgraced. Hasten, my father, to rescue your child from the power of the spoiler, and to vindicate the honour of your house!"

When Florinda had written these lines, she summoned a youthful esquire, who had been a page in the service of her father. "Saddle thy steed," said she, "and if thou dost aspire to knightly honour, or hope for lady's grace—if thou hast fealty for thy lord, or devotion to his daughter—speed swiftly upon my errand. Rest not, halt not, spare not the spur, but hie thee day and night until thou reach the sea; take the first bark, and haste with sail and oar to Ceuta, nor pause until you give this letter to the count my father." The youth put the letter in his bosom. "Trust me, lady," said he, "I will neither halt nor turn aside, nor cast a look behind, until I reach Count Julian." He mounted his fleet steed, sped his way across the bridge, and soon left behind him the verdant valley of the Tagus.

CHAPTER VI.

The heart of Don Roderick was not so depraved by sensuality, but that the wrong he had been guilty of toward the innocent Florinda, and the disgrace he had inflicted on her house weighed heavy on his spirits, and a cloud began to gather on his once clear and unwrinkled brow.

Heaven, at this time, say the old Spanish chronicles, permitted a marvellous intimation of the wrath with which it intended to visit the monarch and his people in punishment of their sins; nor are we, say the same orthodox writers, to

startle, and withhold our faith, when we meet in the page of discreet and sober history with those signs and portents which transcend the probabilities of ordinary life; for the revolutions of empires and the downfall of mighty kings are awful events, that shake the physical as well as the moral world, and are often announced by forerunning marvels and prodigious omens. With such-like cautious preliminaries do the wary but credulous historiographers of yore usher in a marvellous event of prophecy and enchantment, linked in ancient story with the fortunes of Don Roderick, but which modern doubters would fain hold up as an apocryphal tradition of Arabian origin.

Now, so it happened, according to the legend, that about this time, as King Roderick was seated one day on his throne, surrounded by his nobles, in the ancient city of Toledo, two men of venerable appearance entered the hall of audience. Their snowy beards descended to their breasts, and their gray hairs were bound with ivy. They were arrayed in white garments of foreign or antiquated fashion, which swept the ground, and were cinctured with girdles wrought with the signs of the zodiac, from which were suspended enormous bunches of keys of every variety of form. Having approached the throne and made obeisance: "Know, O king," said one of the old men, "that in days of yore, when Hercules of Lybia, surnamed the Strong, had set up his pillars at the ocean strait, he erected a tower near to this ancient city of Toledo. He built it of prodigious strength, and finished it with magic art, shutting up within it a fearful secret, never to be penetrated without peril and disaster. To protect this terrible mystery he closed the entrance to the edifice with a ponderous door of iron, secured by a great lock of steel, and he left a command that every king who should succeed him should add another lock to the portal, denouncing woe and destruction on him who should eventually unfold the secret of the tower.

"The guardianship of the portal was given to our ancestors, and has continued in our family from generation to generation, since the days of Hercules. Several kings, from time to time, have caused the gate to be thrown open, and have attempted to enter, but have paid dearly for their temerity. Some have perished within the threshold, others have been overwhelmed with horror at tremendous sounds, which shook

the foundations of the earth, and have hastened to reclose the door, and secure it with its thousand locks. Thus, since the days of Hercules, the inmost recesses of the pile have never been penetrated by mortal man, and a profound mystery continues to prevail over this great enchantment. This, O king, is all we have to relate, and our errand is to entreat thee to repair to the tower and affix thy lock to the portal, as has been done by all thy predecessors." Having thus said, the ancient men made a profound reverence and departed from the presence chamber.*

Don Roderick remained for some time lost in thought after the departure of the men; he then dismissed all his court, excepting the venerable Urbino, at that time archbishop of Toledo. The long white beard of this prelate bespoke his advanced age, and his overhanging eyebrows showed him a man full of wary counsel.

"Father," said the king, "I have an earnest desire to penetrate the mystery of this tower." The worthy prelate shook his hoary head: "Beware, my son," said he; "there are secrets hidden from man for his good. Your predecessors for many generations have respected this mystery, and have increased in might and empire. A knowledge of it, therefore, is not material to the welfare of your kingdom. Seek not, then, to indulge a rash and unprofitable curiosity, which is interdicted under such awful menaces."

"Of what importance," cried the king, "are the menaces of Hercules, the Lybian? Was he not a pagan? and can his enchantments have aught avail against a believer in our holy faith? Doubtless, in this tower are locked up treasures of gold and jewels, amassed in days of old, the spoils of mighty kings, the riches of the pagan world. My coffers are exhausted; I have need of supply; and surely it would be an acceptable act in the eyes of Heaven to draw forth this wealth which lies buried under profane and necromantic spells, and consecrate it to religious purposes."

The venerable archbishop still continued to remonstrate; but Don Roderick heeded not his counsel, for he was led on by his malignant star. "Father," said he, "it is in vain you attempt to dissuade me; my resolution is fixed. To-morrow

* Perdita de España por Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique, lib. i. cap. 6. Cronica del Rey Don Rodrigo por el moro Rasis, lib. i. cap. 1. Bleda, Cron. cap. vii.

I will explore the hidden mystery, or rather the hidden treasures, of this tower."

CHAPTER VII.

THE morning sun shone brightly upon the cliff-built towers of Toledo, when King Roderick issued out of the gate of the city at the head of a numerous train of courtiers and cavaliers, and crossed the bridge that bestrides the deep rocky bed of the Tagus. The shining cavalcade wound up the road that leads among the mountains, and soon came in sight of the necromantic tower.

Of this renowned edifice marvels are related by the ancient Arabian and Spanish chroniclers; "and I doubt much," adds the venerable Agapida, "whether many readers will not consider the whole as a cunningly devised fable, sprung from an oriental imagination; but it is not for me to reject a fact which is recorded by all those writers who are the fathers of our national history: a fact, too, which is as well attested as most of the remarkable events in the story of Don Roderick. None but light and inconsiderate minds," continues the good friar, "do hastily reject the marvellous. To the thinking mind the whole world is enveloped in mystery, and everything is full of type and portent. To such a mind the necromantic tower of Toledo will appear as one of those wondrous monuments of the olden time; one of those Egyptian and Chaldaic piles, storied with hidden wisdom and mystic prophecy, which have been devised in past ages, when man yet enjoyed an intercourse with high and spiritual natures, and when human foresight partook of divination."

This singular tower was round, and of great height and grandeur; erected upon a lofty rock, and surrounded by crags and precipices. The foundation was supported by four brazen lions, each taller than a cavalier on horseback; the walls were built of small pieces of jasper, and various coloured marbles, not larger than a man's hand, so subtilely joined, however, that, but for their different hues, they might be taken for one entire stone. They were arranged with marvellous cunning, so as to represent battles, and warlike deeds of times and heroes long since passed away, and the whole surface was so admirably polished that the stones were as lustrous as glass,

and reflected the rays of the sun with such resplendent brightness as to dazzle all beholders.*

King Roderick and his courtiers arrived wondering and amazed at the foot of the rock. Here there was a narrow arched way cut through the living stone; the only entrance to the tower. It was closed by a massive iron gate, covered with rusty locks of divers workmanship, and in the fashion of different centuries, which had been affixed by the predecessors of Don Roderick. On either side of the portal stood the two ancient guardians of the tower, laden with the keys appertaining to the locks.

The king alighted, and, approaching the portals, ordered the guardians to unlock the gate. The hoary-headed men drew back with terror. "Alas!" cried they, "what is it your majesty requires of us? Would you have the mischiefs of this tower unbound, and let loose to shake the earth to its foundations?"

The venerable archbishop Urbino likewise implored him not to disturb a mystery which had been held sacred from generation to generation, within the memory of man; and which even Cæsar himself, when sovereign of Spain, had not ventured to invade. The youthful cavaliers, however, were eager to pursue the adventure, and encouraged him in his rash curiosity.

"Come what come may," exclaimed Don Roderick, "I am resolved to penetrate the mystery of this tower." So saying, he again commanded the guardians to unlock the portal. The ancient men obeyed with fear and trembling, but their hands shook with age, and when they applied the keys, the locks were so rusted by time, or of such strange workmanship, that they resisted their feeble efforts; whereupon the young cavaliers pressed forward and lent their aid. Still the locks were so numerous and difficult, that with all their eagerness and strength, a great part of the day was exhausted before the whole of them could be mastered.

When the last bolt had yielded to the key, the guardians and the reverend archbishop again entreated the king to pause and reflect. "Whatever is within this tower," said they, "is as yet harmless, and lies bound under a mighty

* From the minute account of the good friar, drawn from the ancient chronicles, it would appear that the walls of the tower were pictured in mosaic work.

spell: venture not then to open a door which may let forth a flood of evil upon the land." But the anger of the king was roused, and he ordered that the portal should be instantly thrown open. In vain, however, did one after another exert his strength; and equally in vain did the cavaliers unite their forces and apply their shoulders to the gate: though there was neither bar nor bolt remaining, it was perfectly immoveable.

The patience of the king was now exhausted, and he advanced to apply his hand; scarcely, however, did he touch the iron gate, when it swung slowly open, uttering, as it were, a dismal groan, as it turned reluctantly upon its hinges. A cold, damp wind issued forth, accompanied by a tempestuous sound. The hearts of the ancient guardians quaked within them, and their knees smote together; but several of the youthful cavaliers rushed in, eager to gratify their curiosity, or to signalise themselves in this redoubtable enterprise. They had scarcely advanced a few paces, however, when they recoiled, overcome by the baleful air, or by some fearful vision.* Upon this, the king ordered that fires should be kindled to dispel the darkness, and to correct the noxious and long imprisoned air: he then led the way into the interior; but, though stout of heart, he advanced with awe and hesitation.

After proceeding a short distance, he entered a hall, or antechamber, on the opposite side of which was a door; and before it, on a pedestal, stood a gigantic figure, of the colour of bronze, and of a terrible aspect. It held a huge mace, which it whirled incessantly, giving such cruel and resounding blows upon the earth as to prevent all further entrance.

The king paused at sight of this appalling figure; for whether it were a living being, or a statue of magic artifice, he could not tell. On its breast was a scroll, whereon was inscribed in large letters, "I do my duty.†" After a little while Roderick plucked up heart, and addressed it with great solemnity: "Whatever thou be," said he, "know that I come not to violate this sanctuary, but to inquire into the mystery it contains; I conjure thee, therefore, to let me pass in safety."

Upon this, the figure paused with uplifted mace, and the king and his train passed unmolested through the door.

* Bleda, Cronica, cap. 7. † Ibid.

They now entered a vast chamber, of a rare and sumptuous architecture, difficult to be described. The walls were incrusted with the most precious gems, so joined together as to form one smooth and perfect surface. The lofty dome appeared to be self-supported, and was studded with gems, lustrous as the stars of the firmament. There was neither wood nor any other common or base material to be seen throughout the edifice. There were no windows or other openings to admit the day, yet a radiant light was spread throughout the place, which seemed to shine from the walls, and to render every object distinctly visible.

In the centre of this hall stood a table of alabaster, of the rarest workmanship, on which was inscribed in Greek characters, that Hercules Alcides, the Theban Greek, had founded this tower in the year of the world three thousand and six. Upon the table stood a golden casket, richly set round with precious stones, and closed with a lock of mother-of-pearl; and on the lid were inscribed the following words:—

"In this coffer is contained the mystery of the tower. The hand of none but a king can open it; but let him beware! for marvellous events will be revealed to him, which are to take place before his death."

King Roderick boldly seized upon the casket. The venerable archbishop laid his hand upon his arm, and made a last remonstrance. "Forbear, my son!" said he; "desist while there is yet time. Look not into the mysterious decrees of Providence. God has hidden them in mercy from our sight, and it is impious to rend the veil by which they are concealed."

"What have I to dread from a knowledge of the future?" replied Roderick, with an air of haughty presumption. "If good be destined me, I shall enjoy it by anticipation: if evil, I shall arm myself to meet it." So saying, he rashly broke the lock.

Within the coffer he found nothing but a linen cloth, folded between two tablets of copper. On unfolding it, he beheld painted on it figures of men on horseback, of fierce demeanour, clad in turbans and robes of various colours, after the fashion of the Arabs, with scimitars hanging from their necks, and crossbows at their saddle backs, and they carried banners and pennons with divers devices. Above them was inscribed in Greek characters, "Rash monarch! behold the

men who are to hurl thee from thy throne, and subdue thy kingdom!"

At sight of these things the king was troubled in spirit, and dismay fell upon his attendants. While they were yet regarding the paintings, it seemed as if the figures began to move, and a faint sound of warlike tumult arose from the cloth, with the clash of cymbal and bray of trumpet, the neigh of steed and shout of army; but all was heard indistinctly, as if afar off, or in a reverie or dream. The more they gazed, the plainer became the motion, and the louder the noise; and the linen cloth rolled forth, and amplified, and spread out, as it were, a mighty banner, and filled the hall, and mingled with the air, until its texture was no longer visible, or appeared as a transparent cloud: and the shadowy figures became all in motion, and the din and uproar became fiercer and fiercer; and whether the whole were an animated picture, or a vision, or an array of embodied spirits, conjured up by supernatural power, no one present could tell. They beheld before them a great field of battle, where Christians and Moslems were engaged in deadly conflict. They heard the rush and tramp of steeds, the blast of trump and clarion, the clash of cymbal, and the stormy din of a thousand drums. There was the clash of swords, and maces, and battle-axes, with the whistling of arrows, and the hurling of darts and lances. The Christians quailed before the foe; the infidels pressed upon them and put them to utter rout; the standard of the Cross was cast down, the banner of Spain was trodden under foot, the air resounded with shouts of triumph, with yells of fury, and with the groans of dying men. Amidst the flying squadrons, King Roderick beheld a crowned warrior, whose back was turned towards him, but whose armour and device were his own, and who was mounted on a white steed that resembled his own war-horse Orelia. In the confusion of the flight, the warrior was dismounted, and was no longer to be seen, and Orelia galloped wildly through the field of battle without a rider.

Roderick stayed to see no more, but rushed from the fatal hall, followed by his terrified attendants. They fled through the outer chamber, where the gigantic figure with the whirling mace had disappeared from his pedestal; and on issuing into the open air, they found the two ancient guardians of

the tower lying dead at the portal, as though they had been crushed by some mighty blow. All nature, which had been clear and serene, was now in wild uproar. The heavens were darkened by heavy clouds; loud bursts of thunder rent the air, and the earth was deluged with rain and rattling hail.

The king ordered that the iron portal should be closed; but the door was immoveable, and the cavaliers were dismayed by the tremendous turmoil and the mingled shouts and groans that continued to prevail within. The king and his train hastened back to Toledo, pursued and pelted by the tempest. The mountains shook and echoed with the thunder, trees were uprooted and blown down, and the Tagus raged and roared and flowed above its banks. It seemed to the affrighted courtiers as if the phantom legions of the tower had issued forth and mingled with the storm: for amidst the claps of thunder and the howling of the wind, they fancied they heard the sound of the drums and trumpets, the shouts of armies and the rush of steeds. Thus beaten by tempest, and overwhelmed with horror, the king and his courtiers arrived at Toledo, clattering across the bridge of the Tagus, and entering the gate in headlong confusion, as though they had been pursued by an enemy.

In the morning the heavens were again serene, and all nature was restored to tranquillity. The king, therefore, issued forth with his cavaliers, and took the road to the tower, followed by a great multitude, for he was anxious once more to close the iron door, and shut up those evils that threatened to overwhelm the land. But lo! on coming in sight of the tower, a new wonder met their eyes. An eagle appeared high in the air, seeming to descend from heaven. He bore in his beak a burning brand, and lighting on the summit of the tower, fanned the fire with his wings. In a little while the edifice burst forth into a blaze, as though it had been built of rosin, and the flames mounted into the air with a brilliancy more dazzling than the sun; nor did they cease until every stone was consumed, and the whole was reduced to a heap of ashes. Then there came a vast flight of birds, small of size and sable of hue, darkening the sky like a cloud; and they descended and wheeled in circles round the ashes, causing so great a wind with their wings that the whole was borne up into the air and scattered throughout all Spain, and wherever a particle of those ashes fell it was as a

stain of blood. It is furthermore recorded by ancient men and writers of former days, that all those on whom this dust fell were afterwards slain in battle, when the country was conquered by the Arabs, and that the destruction of this necromantic tower was a sign and token of the approaching perdition of Spain.

"Let all those," concludes the cautious friar, "who question the verity of this most marvellous occurrence, consult those admirable sources of our history, the chronicle of the Moor Rasis, and the work entitled 'The Fall of Spain,' written by the Moor, Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique. Let them consult, moreover, the venerable historian Bleda, and the cloud of other Catholic Spanish writers, who have treated of this event, and they will find I have related nothing that has not been printed and published under the inspection and sanction of our holy mother church. God alone knoweth the truth of these things; I speak nothing but what has been handed down to me from times of old."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE course of our legendary narration now returns to notice the fortunes of Count Julian, after his departure from Toledo, to resume his government on the coast of Barbary. He left the Countess Frandina at Algeziras, his paternal domain, for the province under his command was threatened with invasion. In fact, when he arrived at Ceuta he found his post in imminent danger from the all-conquering Moslems. The Arabs of the East, the followers of Mahomet, having subjugated several of the most potent oriental kingdoms, had established their seat of empire at Damascus, where, at this time, it was filled by Waled Almanzor, surnamed "the Sword of God." From thence the tide of Moslem conquest had rolled on to the shores of the Atlantic; so that all Almagreb, or Western Africa, had submitted to the standard of the prophet, with the exception of a portion of Tingitania, lying along the straits; being the province held by the Goths of Spain, and commanded by Count Julian. The Arab invaders were a hundred thousand strong, most of them veteran troops, seasoned in warfare and accustomed to victory. They were [illegible] an old Arab general, Muza ben Nusier, to whom was [illegible] the government of Almagreb; most of which he had

himself conquered. The ambition of this veteran was to make the Moslem conquest complete, by expelling the Christians from the African shores; with this view his troops menaced the few remaining Gothic fortresses of Tingitania, while he himself sat down in person before the walls of Ceuta. The Arab chieftain had been rendered confident by continual success, and thought nothing could resist his arms and the sacred standard of the prophet. Impatient of the tedious delays of a siege, he led his troops boldly against the rock-built towers of Ceuta, and attempted to take the place by storm. The onset was fierce, and the struggle desperate: the swarthy sons of the desert were light and vigorous, and of fiery spirits; but the Goths, inured to danger on this frontier, retained the stubborn valour of their race, so impaired among their brethren in Spain. They were commanded, too, by one skilled in warfare, and ambitious of renown. After a vehement conflict, the Moslem assailants were repulsed from all points, and driven from the walls. Don Julian sallied forth, and harassed them in their retreat; and so severe was the carnage, that the veteran Muza was fain to break up his camp and retire confounded from the siege.

The victory at Ceuta resounded throughout Tingitania, and spread universal joy. On every side were heard shouts of exultation mingled with praises of Count Julian. He was hailed by the people, wherever he went, as their deliverer, and blessings were invoked upon his head. The heart of Count Julian was lifted up, and his spirit swelled within him; but it was with noble and virtuous pride, for he was conscious of having merited the blessings of his country.

In the midst of his exultation, and while the rejoicings of the people were yet sounding in his ears, the page arrived who bore the letter from his unfortunate daughter.

"What tidings from the king?" said the count, as the page knelt before him: "None my lord," replied the youth, "but I bear a letter sent in all haste by the Lady Florinda."

He took the letter from his bosom and presented it to his lord. As Count Julian read it, his countenance darkened and fell. "This," said he, bitterly, "is my reward for serving a tyrant; and these are the honours heaped on me by my country, while fighting its battles in a foreign land. May evil overtake me, and infamy rest upon my name, if I cease until I have full measure of revenge."

Count Julian was vehement in his passions, and took no counsel in his wrath. His spirit was haughty in the extreme, but destitute of true magnanimity, and when once wounded turned to gall and venom. A dark and malignant hatred entered into his soul, not only against Don Roderick, but against all Spain: he looked upon it as the scene of his disgrace, a land in which his family was dishonoured; and, in seeking to avenge the wrongs he had suffered from his sovereign, he meditated against his native country one of the blackest schemes of treason that ever entered into the human heart.

The plan of Count Julian was to hurl King Roderick from his throne, and to deliver all Spain into the hands of the infidels. In concerting and executing this treacherous plot, it seemed as if his whole nature was changed; every lofty and generous sentiment was stifled, and he stooped to the meanest dissimulation. His first object was to extricate his family from the power of the king, and to remove it from Spain before his treason should be known; his next, to deprive the country of its remaining means of defence against an invader.

With these dark purposes at heart, but with an open and serene countenance, he crossed to Spain, and repaired to the court at Toledo. Wherever he came he was hailed with acclamations as a victorious general, and appeared in the presence of his sovereign radiant with the victory of Ceuta. Concealing from King Roderick his knowledge of the outrage upon his house, he professed nothing but the most devoted loyalty and affection.

The king loaded him with favours; seeking to appease his own conscience by heaping honours upon the father in atonement of the deadly wrong inflicted upon his child. He regarded Count Julian, also, as a man able and experienced in warfare, and took his advice in all matters relating to the military affairs of the kingdom. The count magnified the dangers that threatened the frontier under his command, and prevailed upon the king to send thither the best horses and arms remaining from the time of Witiza, there being no need of them in the centre of Spain in its present tranquil state. The residue, at his suggestion, was stationed on the frontiers of Gallia; so that the kingdom was left almost wholly without defence against any sudden irruption from the south.

Having thus artfully arranged his plans, and all things

being prepared for his return to Africa, he obtained permission to withdraw his daughter from the court, and leave her with her mother, the Countess Frandina, who, he pretended, lay dangerously ill at Algeziras. Count Julian issued out of the gate of the city, followed by a shining band of chosen followers, while beside him, on a palfrey, rode the pale and weeping Florinda. The populace hailed and blessed him as he passed, but his heart turned from them with loathing. As he crossed the bridge of the Tagus, he looked back with a dark brow upon Toledo, and raised his mailed hand and shook it at the royal palace of King Roderick, which crested the rocky height. "A father's curse," said he, "be upon thee and thine! May desolation fall upon thy dwelling, and confusion and defeat upon thy realm!"

In his journeyings through the country, he looked round him with a malignant eye; the pipe of the shepherd, and the song of the husbandman, were as discord to his soul; every sight and sound of human happiness sickened him at heart, and, in the bitterness of his spirit, he prayed that he might see the whole scene of prosperity laid waste with fire and sword by the invader.

The story of domestic outrage and disgrace had already been made known to the Countess Frandina. When the hapless Florinda came in presence of her mother, she fell on her neck, and hid her face in her bosom, and wept; but the countess shed never a tear, for she was a woman haughty of spirit and strong of heart. She looked her husband sternly in the face. "Perdition light upon thy head," said she, "if thou submit to this dishonour. For my own part, woman as I am, I will assemble the followers of my house, nor rest until rivers of blood have washed away this stain."

"Be satisfied," replied the count; "vengeance is on foot, and will be sure and ample."

Being now in his own domains, surrounded by his relatives and friends, Count Julian went on to complete his web of treason. In this he was aided by his brother-in-law, Oppas, the bishop of Seville: a man dark and perfidious as the night, but devout in demeanour, and smoothly plausible in council. This artful prelate had contrived to work himself into the entire confidence of the king, and had even prevailed upon him to permit his nephews, Evan and Sisebuto, the exiled sons of Witiza, to return into Spain. They resided in Anda-

lusia, and were now looked to as fit instruments in the present traitorous conspiracy.

By the advice of the bishop, Count Julian called a secret meeting of his relatives and adherents on a wild rocky mountain, not far from Consuegra, and which still bears the Moorish appellation of "La Sierra de Calderin," or the mountain of treason.* When all were assembled. Count Julian appeared among them, accompanied by the bishop and by the Countess Frandina. Then gathering around him those who were of his blood and kindred, he revealed the outrage that had been offered to their house. He represented to them that Roderick was their legitimate enemy; that he had dethroned Witiza, their relation, and had now stained the honour of one of the most illustrious daughters of their line. The Countess Frandina seconded his words. She was a woman majestic in person and eloquent of tongue, and being inspired by a mother's feelings, her speech aroused the assembled cavaliers to fury.

The count took advantage of the excitement of the moment to unfold his plan. The main object was to dethrone Don Roderick, and give the crown to the sons of the late King Witiza. By this means they would visit the sins of the tyrant upon his head, and, at the same time, restore the regal honours to their line. For this purpose their own force would be sufficient, but they might procure the aid of Muza ben Nosier, the Arabian general, in Mauritania, who would no doubt gladly send a part of his troops into Spain to assist in the enterprise.

The plot thus suggested by Count Julian received the unholy sanction of Bishop Oppas, who engaged to aid it secretly with all his influence and means: for he had great wealth and possessions, and many retainers. The example of the reverend prelate determined all who might otherwise have wavered, and they bound themselves by dreadful oaths to be true to the conspiracy. Count Julian undertook to proceed to Africa, and seek the camp of Muza, to negociate for his aid, while the bishop was to keep about the person of King Roderick, and lead him into the net prepared for him.

All things being thus arranged, Count Julian gathered together his treasure, and taking his wife and daughter and all his household, abandoned the country he meant to betray;

* Bleda, cap. 5.

embarking at Malaga for Ceuta. The gate in the wall of that city, through which they went forth, continued for ages to bear the name of *Puerta de la Cava*, or the gate of the harlot; for such was the opprobrious and unmerited appellation bestowed by the Moors on the unhappy Florinda.*

CHAPTER IX.

When Count Julian had placed his family in security in Ceuta, surrounded by soldiery devoted to his fortunes, he took with him a few confidential followers, and departed in secret for the camp of the Arabian Emir, Muza ben Nosier. The camp was spread out in one of those pastoral valleys which lie at the feet of the Barbary hills, with the great range of the Atlas mountains towering in the distance. In the motley army here assembled were warriors of every tribe and nation, that had been united by pact or conquest in the cause of Islam. There were those who had followed Muza from the fertile regions of Egypt, across the deserts of Barca, and those who had joined his standard from among the sun-burnt tribes of Mauritania. There were Saracen and Tartar, Syrian and Copt, and swarthy Moor; sumptuous warriors from the civilised cities of the east, and the gaunt and predatory rovers of the desert. The greater part of the army, however, was composed of Arabs; but differing greatly from the first rude hordes that enlisted under the banner of Mahomet. Almost a century of continual wars with the cultivated nations of the east had rendered them accomplished warriors; and the occasional sojourn in luxurious countries and populous cities, had acquainted them with the arts and habits of civilised life. Still the roving, restless, and predatory habits of the genuine son of Ishmael prevailed, in defiance of every change of clime or situation.

Count Julian found the Arab conqueror Muza surrounded by somewhat of oriental state and splendour. He was advanced in life, but of a noble presence, and concealed his age by tinging his hair and beard with henna. The count assumed an air of soldier-like frankness, and decision when he came into his presence. "Hitherto," said he, "we have been enemies, but I come to thee in peace, and it rests with thee to make me the most devoted of thy friends. I have no

* Bleda, cap. 4.

longer country or king. Roderick the Goth is an usurper, and my deadly foe; he has wounded my honour in the tenderest point, and my country affords me no redress. Aid me in my vengeance, and I will deliver all Spain into thy hands: a land far exceeding in fertility and wealth all the vaunted regions thou hast conquered in Tingitania."

The heart of Muza leaped with joy at these words, for he was a bold and ambitious conqueror, and, having overrun all western Africa, had often cast a wistful eye to the mountains of Spain, as he beheld them brightening beyond the waters of the strait. Still he possessed the caution of a veteran, and feared to engage in an enterprise of such moment, and to carry his arms into another division of the globe, without the approbation of his sovereign. Having drawn from Count Julian the particulars of his plan, and of the means he possessed to carry it into effect, he laid them before his confidential counsellors and officers, and demanded their opinion. "These words of Count Julian," said he, "may be false and deceitful; or he may not possess the power to fulfil his promises. The whole may be a pretended treason to draw us on to our destruction. It is more natural that he should be treacherous to us than to his country."

Among the generals of Muza was a gaunt, swarthy veteran, scarred with wounds; a very Arab, whose great delight was roving and desperate enterprise; and who cared for nothing beyond his steed, his lance, and his scimitar. He was a native of Damascus; his name was Taric ben Zeyad; but, from having lost an eye, he was known among the Spaniards by the appellation of Taric el Tuerto, or Taric the one-eyed.

The hot blood of this veteran Ishmaelite was in a ferment when he heard of a new country to invade, and vast regions to subdue; and he dreaded lest the cautious hesitation of Muza should permit the glorious prize to escape them. "You speak doubtingly," said he, "of the words of this Christian cavalier, but their truth is easily to be ascertained. Give me four galleys and a handful of men, and I will depart with this Count Julian, skirt the Christian coast, and bring thee back tidings of the land, and of his means to put it in our power."

The words of the veteran pleased Muza ben Nosier, and he gave his consent: and Taric departed with four galleys and five hundred men, guided by the traitor Julian.* This first

* Beuter, Cron. Gen. de España, lib. i. cap. 28. Marmol. Descrip. de Africa, lib. 2. cap. 10.

expedition of the Arabs against Spain took place, according to certain historians, in the year of our Lord seven hundred and twelve; though others differ on this point, as indeed they do upon almost every point in this early period of Spanish history. The date to which the judicious chroniclers incline, is that of seven hundred and ten, in the month of July. It would appear from some authorities, also, that the galleys of Taric cruised along the coasts of Andalusia and Lusitania, under the feigned character of merchant barks; nor is this at all improbable, while they were seeking merely to observe the land, and get a knowledge of the harbours. Wherever they touched, Count Julian despatched emissaries, to assemble his friends and adherents at an appointed place. They gathered together secretly at Gezira Alhadra, that is to say the Green Island; where they held a conference with Count Julian in presence of Taric ben Zeyad.* Here they again avowed their readiness to flock to his standard whenever it should be openly raised, and made known their various preparations for a rebellion. Taric was convinced, by all that he had seen and heard, that Count Julian had not deceived them; either as to his disposition or his means to betray his country. Indulging his Arab inclinations, he made an inroad into the land, collected great spoil and many captives, and bore off his plunder in triumph to Muza, as a specimen of the riches to be gained by the conquest of the Christian land.†

CHAPTER X.

On hearing the tidings brought by Taric el Tuerto, and beholding the spoil he had collected, Muza wrote a letter to the Caliph Waled Almanzor, setting forth the traitorous proffer of Count Julian, and the probability, through his means, of making a successful invasion of Spain. "A new land," said he, "spreads itself out before our delighted eyes, and invites our conquest: a land, too, that equals Syria in the fertility of its soil, and the serenity of its sky; Yemen, or Arabia the happy, in its delightful temperature; India, in its flowers and spices; Hegias, in its fruits and flowers; Cathay, in its precious minerals; and Aden, in the excellence of its ports and harbours! It is populous also, and wealthy;

* Bleda; Cron. cap. 5.
† Conde, Hist. Dom. Arab. part i. cap. 8

having many splendid cities, and majestic monuments of ancient art. What is to prevent this glorious land from becoming the inheritance of the faithful? Already we have overcome the tribes of Berbery, of Zab, of Derar, of Zaara, Mazamuda and Sus; and the victorious standard of Islam floats on the towers of Tangier. But four leagues of sea separate us from the opposite coast. One word from my sovereign, and the conquerors of Africa will pour their legions into Andalusia, rescue it from the domination of the unbeliever, and subdue it to the law of the Koran."*

The Caliph was overjoyed with the contents of the letter. "God is great!" exclaimed he, "and Mahomet is his prophet! It has been foretold by the ambassador of God, that his law should extend to the ultimate parts of the west, and be carried by the sword into new and unknown regions. Behold, another land is opened for the triumphs of the faithful! It is the will of Allah, and be his sovereign will obeyed!" So the Caliph sent missives to Muza, authorising him to undertake the conquest.

Upon this there was a great stir of preparation, and numerous vessels were assembled and equipped at Tangier to convey the invading army across the Straits. Twelve thousand men were chosen for this expedition, most of them light Arabian troops, seasoned in warfare, and fitted for hardy and rapid enterprise. Among them were many horsemen, mounted on fleet Arabian steeds. The whole was put under the command of the veteran Taric el Tuerto, or the one-eyed, in whom Muza reposed implicit confidence, as in a second self. Taric accepted the command with joy; his martial fire was roused at the idea of having such an army under his sole command and such a country to overrun, and he secretly determined never to return unless victorious.

He chose a dark night to convey his troops across the Straits of Hercules, and, by break of day, they began to disembark at Tarifa, before the country had time to take the alarm. A few Christians hastily assembled from the neighbourhood, and opposed their landing, but were easily put to flight. Taric stood on the sea-side, and watched until the last squadron had landed, and all the horses, armour, and munitions of war were brought on shore; he then gave orders to set fire to the ships. The Moslems were struck with terror when they

* Conde, part i. cap. 8.

beheld their fleet wrapped in flames and smoke, and sinking beneath the waves. "How shall we escape," exclaimed they, "if the fortune of war should be against us?" "There is no escape for the coward!" cried Taric: "the brave man thinks of none; your only chance is victory." "But how, without ships, shall we ever return to our homes?" "Your home," replied Taric, "is before you; but you must win it with your swords."

While Taric was yet talking with his followers, says one of the ancient chroniclers, a Christian female was descried waving a white pennon on a reed, in signal of peace. On being brought into the presence of Taric she prostrated herself before him. "Senior," said she, "I am an ancient woman, and it is now full sixty years, past and gone, since, as I was keeping vigils one winter's night by the fireside, I heard my father, who was an exceeding old man, read a prophecy, said to have been written by a holy friar, and this was the purport of the prophecy:—that a time would arrive when our country would be invaded and conquered by a people from Africa, of a strange garb, a strange tongue, and a strange religion. They were to be led by a strong and valiant captain, who would be known by these signs: on his right shoulder he would have a hairy mole, and his right arm would be much longer than the left, and of such length as to enable him to cover his knee with his hand without bending his body."

Taric listened to the old beldame with grave attention; and, when she had concluded, he laid bare his shoulder, and lo! there was the mole as it had been described; his right arm, also, was, in verity, found to exceed the other in length, though not to the degree that had been mentioned. Upon this the Arab host shouted for joy, and felt assured of conquest.*

The discreet Antonio Agapida, though he records this circumstance as it is set down in ancient chronicle, yet withholds his belief from the pretended prophecy, considering the whole a cunning device of Taric to increase the courage of his troops. "Doubtless," says he, "there was a collusion between this ancient sybil and the crafty son of Ishmael; for these infidel leaders were full of damnable inventions, to

* Perdida de España, por Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique, lib. i. c. vii.

work upon the superstitious fancies of their followers, and to inspire them with a blind confidence in the success of their arms.

Be this as it may, the veteran Taric took advantage of the excitement of his soldiery, and led them forward to gain possession of a strong-hold which was, in a manner, the key to all the adjacent country. This was a lofty mountain, or promontory, almost surrounded by the sea, and connected with the main land by a narrow isthmus. It was called the rock of Calpe, and, like the opposite rock of Ceuta, commanded the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. Here, in old times, Hercules had set up one of his pillars, and the city of Heraclea had been built.

As Taric advanced against this promontory, he was opposed by a hasty levy of the Christians, who had assembled under the banner of a Gothic noble of great power and importance, whose domains lay along the mountainous coast of the Mediterranean. The name of this Christian cavalier was Theodomir, but he has universally been called Tadmir by the Arabian historians, and is renowned as being the first commander that made any stand against the inroad of the Moslems. He was about forty years of age, hardy, prompt, and sagacious; and had all the Gothic nobles been equally vigilant and shrewd in their defence, the banner of Islam would never have triumphed over the land.

Theodomir had but seventeen hundred men under his command, and these but rudely armed; yet he made a resolute stand against the army of Taric, and defended the pass to the promontory with great valour. He was, at length, obliged to retreat; and Taric advanced, and planted his standard on the rock of Calpe, and fortified it as his stronghold, and as the means of securing an entrance into the land. To commemorate his first victory, he changed the name of the promontory, and called it Gibel Taric, or the mountain of Taric; but in process of time, the name has gradually been altered to Gibraltar.

In the meantime, the patriotic chieftain, Theodomir, having collected his routed forces, encamped with them on the skirts of the mountains, and summoned the country round to join his standard. He sent off missives, in all speed, to the king, imparting in brief and blunt terms, the news of the invasion, and craving assistance with equal frankness. "Senior," said

he, in his letter, "the legions of Africa are upon us, but whether they come from heaven or earth I know not. They seem to have fallen from the clouds, for they have no ships. We have been taken by surprise, overpowered by numbers, and obliged to retreat; and they have fortified themselves in our territory. Send us aid, senior, with instant speed; or, rather, come yourself to our assistance."*

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Don Roderick heard that legions of turbaned troops had poured into the land from Africa, he called to mind the visions and predictions of the necromantic tower, and great fear came upon him. But, though sunk from his former hardihood and virtue, though enervated by indulgence, and degraded in spirit by a consciousness of crime, he was resolute of soul, and roused himself to meet the coming danger. He summoned a hasty levy of horse and foot, amounting to forty thousand: but now were felt the effects of the crafty council of Count Julian, for the best of the horses and armour intended for the public service had been sent into Africa, and were really in possession of the traitors. Many nobles, it is true, took the field with the sumptuous array with which they had been accustomed to appear at tournaments and jousts, but most of their vassals were destitute of weapons, and cased in cuirasses of leather, or suits of armour almost consumed by rust. They were without discipline or animation; and their horses, like themselves, pampered by slothful peace, were little fitted to bear the heat, the dust, and toil, of long campaigns.

This army Don Roderick put under the command of his kinsman, Ataulpho, a prince of the royal blood of the Goths, and of a noble and generous nature; and he ordered him to march with all speed to meet the foe, and to recruit his forces on the way with the troops of Theodomir.

In the meantime, Taric el Tuerto had received large reinforcements from Africa, and the adherents of Count Julian, and all those discontented with the sway of Don Roderick, had flocked to his standard, for many were deceived by the representations of Count Julian, and thought that the Arabs had come to aid him in placing the sons of Witiza upon the

* Conde, part i. c. ix.

throne. Guided by the count, the troops of Taric penetrated into various parts of the country, and laid waste the land, bringing back loads of spoil to their strong-hold at the rock of Calpe.

The prince Ataulpho marched with his army through Andalusia, and was joined by Theodomir with his troops; he met with various detachments of the enemy foraging the country, and had several bloody skirmishes; but he succeeded in driving them before him, and they retreated to the rock of Calpe, where Taric lay gathered up with the main body of his army.

The prince encamped not far from the bay which spreads itself out before the promontory. In the evening he despatched the veteran Theodomir, with a trumpet, to demand a parley of the Arab chieftain, who received the envoy in his tent, surrounded by his captains. Theodomir was frank and abrupt in his speech, for the most of his life had been passed far from courts. He delivered, in round terms, the message of the Prince Ataulpho, upbraiding the Arab general with his wanton invasion of the land, and summoning him to surrender his army, or to expect no mercy.

The single eye of Taric el Tuerto glowed like a coal of fire at this message. "Tell your commander," replied he, "that I have crossed the strait to conquer Spain, nor will I return until I have accomplished my purpose. Tell him I have men skilled in war, and armed in proof, with whose aid I trust soon to give a good account of his rabble host."

A murmur of applause passed through the assemblage of Moslem captains. Theodomir glanced on them with a look of defiance, but his eye rested on a renegado Christian, one of his own ancient comrades, and a relation of Count Julian. "As to you, Don Greybeard," said he, "you who turn apostate in your declining age, I here pronounce you a traitor to your God, your king, and country, and stand ready to prove it this instant upon your body, if field be granted me."

The traitor knight was stung with rage at these words, for truth rendered them piercing to the heart. He would have immediately answered to the challenge, but Taric forbade it, and ordered that the Christian envoy should be conducted from the camp. "'Tis well," replied Theodomir; "God will give me the field which you deny. Let yon hoary apostate look to himself to-morrow in the battle, for I pledge myself

to use my lance upon no other foe until it has shed his blood upon the native soil he has betrayed." So saying, he left the camp, nor could the Moslem chieftains help admiring the honest indignation of this patriot knight, while they secretly despised his renegado adversary.

The ancient Moorish chroniclers relate many awful portents, and strange and mysterious visions, which appeared to the commanders of either army during this anxious night. Certainly it was a night of fearful suspense, and Moslem and Christian looked forward with doubt to the fortune of the coming day. The Spanish sentinel walked his pensive round, listening occasionally to the vague sounds from the distant rock of Calpe, and eyeing it as the mariner eyes the thunder-cloud, pregnant with terror and destruction. The Arabs, too, from their lofty cliffs beheld the numerous camp-fires of the Christians gradually lighted up, and saw that they were a powerful host; at the same time the night breeze brought to their ears the sullen roar of the sea which separated them from Africa. When they considered their perilous situation—an army on one side, with a whole nation aroused to reinforce it, and on the other an impassable sea, the spirits of many of the warriors were cast down, and they repented the day when they had ventured into this hostile land.

Taric marked their despondency, but said nothing. Scarce had the first streak of morning light trembled along the sea, however, when he summoned his principal warriors to his tent. "Be of good cheer," said he, "Allah is with us, and has sent his prophet to give assurance of his aid. Scarce had I retired to my tent last night, when a man of a majestic and venerable presence stood before me. He was taller by a palm than the ordinary race of men: his flowing beard was of a golden hue, and his eyes were so bright that they seemed to send forth flashes of fire. I have heard the Emir Bahamet, and other ancient men, describe the prophet, whom they had seen many times while on earth, and such was his form and lineament. 'Fear nothing, O Taric, from the morrow,' said he, 'I will be with thee in the fight. Strike boldly, then, and conquer. Those of thy followers who survive the battle will have this land for an inheritance; for those who fall, a mansion in paradise is prepared, and immortal houris await their coming.' He spake and vanished; I heard a strain of celestial melody, and my tent was filled with the odours of

Arabia the happy." "Such," say the Spanish chroniclers, "was another of the arts by which this arch son of Ishmael sought to animate the hearts of his followers;" and the pretended vision had been recorded by the Arabian writers as a veritable occurrence. Marvellous, indeed, was the effect produced by it upon the infidel soldiery, who now cried out with eagerness to be led against the foe.

CHAPTER XII.

The grey summits of the rock of Calpe brightened with the first rays of morning, as the Christian army issued forth from its encampment. The Prince Ataulpho rode from squadron to squadron, animating his soldiers for the battle. "Never should we sheathe our swords," said he, "while these infidels have a footing in the land. They are pent up within yon rocky mountain, we must assail them in their rugged hole. We have a long day before us: let not the setting sun shine upon one of their host who is not a fugitive, a captive, or a corpse."

The words of the prince were received with shouts, and the army moved towards the promontory. As they advanced, they heard the clash of cymbals and the bray of trumpets, and the rocky bosom of the mountain glittered with helms and spears and scimitars; for the Arabs, inspired with fresh confidence by the words of Taric, were sallying forth, with flaunting banners, to the combat.

The gaunt Arab chieftain stood upon a rock as his troops marched by; his buckler was at his back, and he brandished in his hand a double-pointed spear. Calling upon the several leaders by their names, he exhorted them to direct their attacks against the Christian captains, and especially against Ataulpho, "for the chiefs being slain," said he, "their followers will vanish from before us like the morning mist."

The Gothic nobles were easily to be distinguished by the splendour of their arms; but the prince Ataulpho was conspicuous above all the rest for the youthful grace and majesty of his appearance, and the bravery of his array. He was mounted on a superb Andalusian charger, richly caparisoned with crimson velvet, embroidered with gold. His surcoat was of like colour and adornment, and the plumes that waved above his burnished helmet, were of the purest white. Ten

mounted pages, magnificently attired, followed him to the field, but their duty was not so much to fight as to attend upon their lord, and to furnish him with steed or weapon.

The Christian troops, though irregular and undisciplined, were full of native courage: for the old warrior spirit of their Gothic sires still glowed in their bosoms. There were two battalions of infantry, but Ataulpho stationed them in the rear; "for God forbid," said he, "that foot soldiers should have the place of honour in the battle, when I have so many valiant cavaliers." As the armies drew nigh to each other, however, it was discovered that the advance of the Arabs was composed of infantry. Upon this the cavaliers checked their steeds, and requested that the foot soldiery might advance and disperse this losel crew, holding it beneath their dignity to contend with pedestrian foes. The prince, however, commanded them to charge; upon which, putting spurs to their steeds, they rushed upon the foe.

The Arabs stood the shock manfully, receiving the horses upon the points of their lances; many of the riders were shot down with bolts from cross-bows, or stabbed with the poinards of the Moslems. The cavaliers succeeded, however, in breaking into the midst of the battalion and throwing it into confusion, cutting down some with their swords, transpiercing others with their spears, and trampling many under the hoofs of their horses. At this moment, they were attacked by a band of Spanish horsemen, the recreant partisans of Count Julian. Their assault bore hard upon their countrymen, who were disordered by the contest with the foot soldiers, and many a loyal Christian knight fell beneath the sword of an unnatural foe.

The foremost among these recreant warriors was the renegado cavalier whom Theodomir had challenged in the tent of Taric. He dealt his blows about him with a powerful arm and with malignant fury, for nothing is more deadly than the hatred of an apostate. In the midst of his career he was espied by the hardy Theodomir, who came spurring to the encounter: "Traitor," cried he, "I have kept my vow. This lance has been held sacred from all other foes, to make a passage for thy perjured soul." The renegado had been renowned for prowess before he became a traitor to his country; but guilt will sap the courage of the stoutest heart. When he beheld Theodomir rushing upon him, he would

have turned and fled; pride alone withheld him; and, though an admirable master of defence, he lost all skill to ward the attack of his adversary. At the first assault the lance of Theodomir pierced him through and through: he fell to the earth, gnashed his teeth as he rolled in the dust, but yielded his breath without uttering a word.

The battle now became general, and lasted throughout the morning with varying success. The stratagem of Taric, however began to produce its effect. The Christian leaders and most conspicuous cavaliers were singled out and severally assailed by overpowering numbers. They fought desperately, and performed miracles of prowess, but fell, one by one, beneath a thousand wounds. Still the battle lingered on throughout a great part of the day, and as the declining sun shone through the clouds of dust, it seemed as if the conflicting hosts were wrapped in smoke and fire.

The Prince Ataulpho saw that the fortune of the battle was against him. He rode about the field calling out the names of the bravest of his knights, but few answered to his call, the rest lay mangled on the field. With this handful of warriors he endeavoured to retrieve the day, when he was assailed by Tenderos, a partisan of Count Julian, at the head of a body of recreant Christians. At sight of this new adversary, fire flashed from the eyes of the prince, for Tenderos had been brought up in his father's palace. "Well dost thou, traitor!" cried he, "to attack the son of thy lord, who gave thee bread; thou, who hast betrayed thy country and thy God!"

So saying, he seized a lance from one of his pages, and charged furiously upon the apostate; but Tenderos met him in mid career, and the lance of the prince was shivered upon his shield. Ataulpho then grasped his mace, which hung at his saddle bow, and a doubtful fight ensued. Tenderos was powerful of frame and superior in the use of his weapons, but the curse of treason seemed to paralyse his arm. He wounded Ataulpho slightly between the greaves of his armour but the prince dealt a blow with his mace that crushed through helm and skull, and reached the brains; and Tenderos fell dead to the earth, his armour rattling as he fell.

At the same moment a javelin, hurled by an Arab, transpierced the horse of Ataulpho, which sunk beneath him. The prince seized the reins of the steed of Tenderos, but the faithful animal, as though he knew him to be the foe of his late

lord, reared, and plunged, and refused to let him mount. The prince, however, used him as a shield to ward off the press of foes, while with his sword, he defended himself against those in front of him. Taric ben Zeyad arrived at the scene of conflict, and paused for a moment in admiration of the surpassing prowess of the prince; recollecting, however, that his fall would be a death blow to his army, he spurred upon him, and wounded him severely with his scimitar. Before he could repeat his blow, Theodomir led up a body of Christian cavaliers to the rescue, and Taric was parted from his prey by the tumult of the fight. The prince sank to the earth, covered with wounds, and exhausted by the loss of blood. A faithful page drew him from under the hoofs of the horses, and, aided by a veteran soldier, an ancient vassal of Ataulpho, conveyed him to a short distance from the field of battle, by the side of a small stream that gushed out from among rocks. They stanched the blood that flowed from his wounds, and washed the dust from his face, and laid him beside the fountain. The page sat at his head, and supported it on his knees, and the veteran stood at his feet with his brow bent and his eyes full of sorrow. The prince gradually revived, and opened his eyes. "How fares the battle?" said he. "The struggle is hard," replied the soldier, "but the day may yet be ours."

The prince felt that the hour of his death was at hand, and ordered that they should aid him to rise upon his knees. They supported him between them, and he prayed fervently for a short time, when, finding his strength declining, he beckoned the veteran to sit down beside him on the rock. Continuing to kneel, he confessed himself to that ancient soldier; having no priest or friar to perform that office in this hour of extremity. When he had so done, he sunk again upon the earth, and pressed it with his lips, as if he would take a fond farewell of his beloved country. The page would then have raised his head, but found that his lord had yielded up the ghost.

A number of Arab warriors, who came to the fountain to slake their thirst, cut off the head of the prince, and bore it in triumph to Taric, crying, "Behold the head of the Christian leader!" Taric immediately ordered that the head should be put upon the end of a lance, together with the surcoat of the prince, and borne about the field of battle,

with the sound of trumpets, atabals, and cymbals. When the Christians beheld the surcoat, and knew the features of the prince, they were struck with horror, and heart and hand failed them. Theodomir endeavoured in vain to rally them; they threw by their weapons and fled; and they continued to fly, and the enemy to pursue and slay them, until the darkness of the night. The Moslems then returned, and plundered the Christian camp, where they found abundant spoil.

CHAPTER XIII.

The scattered fugitives of the Christian army spread terror throughout the land. The inhabitants of the towns and villages gathered around them as they applied at their gates for food; or lay themselves down, faint and wounded, beside the public fountains. When they related the tale of their defeat, old men shook their heads and groaned, and the women uttered cries and lamentations. So strange and unlooked-for a calamity filled them with consternation and despair; for it was long since the alarm of war had sounded in their land: and this was a warfare that carried chains and slavery, and all kinds of horrors, in its train.

Don Roderick was seated with his beauteous queen, Exilona, in the royal palace which crowned the rocky summit of Toledo, when the bearer of ill-tidings came galloping over the bridge of the Tagus. "What tidings from the army?" demanded the king, as the panting messenger was brought into his presence. "Tidings of great woe!" exclaimed the soldier. "The prince has fallen in battle. I saw his head and surcoat upon a Moorish lance; and the army was overthrown and fled!"

At hearing these words, Roderick covered his face with his hands, and for some time sat in silence; and all his courtiers stood mute and aghast, and no one dared to speak a word. In that awful space of time passed before his thoughts all his errors and his crimes, and the evil that had been predicted in the necromantic tower. His mind was filled with horror and confusion, for the hour of his destruction seemed at hand: but he subdued his agitation by his strong and haughty spirit; and, when he uncovered his face, no one could read on his brow the trouble and agony

of his heart. Still, every hour brought fresh tidings of disaster. Messenger after messenger came spurring into the city, distracting it with new alarms. The infidels, they said, were strengthening themselves in the land; host after host were pouring in from Africa: the sea coast of Andalusia glittered with spears and scimitars. Bands of turbaned horsemen had overrun the plains of Sidonia, even to the banks of the Guadiana. Fields were laid waste, towns and cities plundered, the inhabitants carried into captivity, and the whole country lay in smoking desolation.

Roderick heard all these tidings with an undaunted aspect; nor did he ever again betray sign of consternation: but the anxiety of his soul was evident in his warlike preparations. He issued orders that every noble and prelate of his kingdom should put himself at the head of his retainers, and take the field; and that every man capable of bearing arms should hasten to his standard, bringing whatever horse, and mule, and weapon he possessed: and he appointed the plain of Cordova for the place where the army was to assemble. Throwing by, then, all the trappings of his late slothful and voluptuous life, and arming himself for warlike action, he departed from Toledo at the head of his guard, composed of the flower of the youthful nobility. His queen, Exilona, accompanied him; for she craved permission to remain in one of the cities of Andalusia, that she might be near her lord in this time of peril.

Among the first who appeared to hail the arrival of the king at Cordova, was the Bishop Oppas, the secret partisan of the traitor Julian. He brought with him his two nephews, Evan and Siseburto, the sons of the late king Witiza; and a great hosts of vassals and retainers, all well armed and appointed; for they had been furnished, by Count Julian, with a part of the arms sent by the king to Africa. The bishop was smooth of tongue, and profound in his hypocrisy: his pretended zeal and devotion, and the horror with which he spoke of the treachery of his kinsman, imposed upon the credulous spirit of the king, and he was readily admitted into his most secret council.

The alarm of the infidel invasion had spread throughout the land, and roused the Gothic valour of the inhabitants. On receiving the orders of Roderick, every town and hamlet, every mountain and valley, had sent forth its fighting men,

and the whole country was on the march towards Andalusia. In a little while there were gathered together, on the plain of Cordova, near fifty thousand horsemen, and a countless host of foot-soldiers. The Gothic nobles appeared in burnished armour, curiously inlaid and adorned, with chains and jewels of gold, and ornaments of precious stones, and silken scarfs, and surcoats of brocade, or velvet richly embroidered; betraying the luxury and ostentation into which they had declined from the iron hardihood of their warlike sires. As to the common people, some had lances and shields and swords and crossbows, but the greater part were unarmed, or provided merely with slings, and clubs studded with nails, and with the iron implements of husbandry; and many had made shields for themselves from the doors and windows of their habitations. They were a prodigious host, and appeared, say the Arabian chroniclers, like an agitated sea; but, though brave in spirit, they possessed no knowledge of warlike art, and were ineffectual through lack of arms and discipline.

Several of the most ancient and experienced cavaliers beholding the state of the army, advised Don Roderick to await the arrival of more regular troops, which were stationed in Iberia, Cantabria, and Gallia Gothica; but this counsel was strenuously opposed by the Bishop Oppas; who urged the king to march immediately against the infidels. "As yet," said he, "their number is but limited; but every day new hosts arrive, like flocks of locusts from Africa. They will augment faster than we; they are living, too, at our expense, and, while we pause, both armies are consuming the substance of the land."

King Roderick listened to the crafty counsel of the bishop, and determined to advance without delay. He mounted his war horse, Orelia, and rode among his troops assembled on that spacious plain, and wherever he appeared, he was received with acclamations; for nothing so arouses the spirit of the soldier as to behold his sovereign in arms. He addressed them in words calculated to touch their hearts and animate their courage. "The Saracens," said he, "are ravaging our land, and their object is our conquest. Should they prevail, your very existence as a nation is at an end. They will overturn your altars; trample on the cross; lay waste your cities; carry off your wives and daughters, and doom yourselves and sons to hard and cruel slavery. No safety remains

for you but in the prowess of your arms. For my own part, as I am your king, so will I be your leader, and will be the foremost to encounter every toil and danger."

The soldiery answered their monarch with loud acclamations, and solemnly pledged themselves to fight to the last gasp in defence of their country and their faith. The king then arranged the order of their march: all those who were armed with cuirasses and coats of mail were placed in the front and rear; the centre of the army was composed of a promiscuous throng, without body armour, and but scantily provided with weapons.

When they were about to march, the king called to him a noble cavalier named Ramiro, and delivering him the royal standard, charged him to guard it well for the honour of Spain; scarcely, however, had the good knight received it in his hand, when he fell dead from his horse, and the staff of the standard was broken in twain. Many ancient courtiers who were present looked upon this as an evil omen, and counselled the king not to set forward on his march that day; but, disregarding all auguries and portents, he ordered the royal banner to be put upon a lance and gave it in charge of another standard bearer: then commanding the trumpets to be sounded, he departed at the head of his host to seek the enemy.

The field where this great army assembled was called, from the solemn pledge given by the nobles and the soldiery, *El campo de la verdad*; or, The field of truth; a name, says the sage chronicler Abul Cassim, which it bears even to the present day.*

CHAPTER XIV.

The hopes of Andalusia revived, as this mighty host stretched in lengthened lines along its fertile plains; from morn until night it continued to pour along, with sound of drum and trumpet; it was led on by the proudest nobles and bravest cavaliers of the land, and, had it possessed arms and discipline, might have undertaken the conquest of the world.

After a few days' march, Don Roderick arrived in sight of the Moslem army, encamped on the banks of the Gaudalete,

* La Perdida de España, cap. 9. Bleda, lib. 2. c. 8.

where that beautiful stream* winds through the fertile land of Xeres. The infidel host was far inferior in number to the Christians; but then it was composed of hardy and dexterous troops, seasoned to war and admirably armed. The camp shone gloriously in the setting sun, and resounded with the clash of cymbal, the note of the trumpet, and the neighing of fiery Arabian steeds. There were swarthy troops from every nation of the African coast, together with legions from Syria and Egypt, while the light Bedouins were careering about the adjacent plain. What grieved and incensed the spirits of the Christian warriors, however, was to behold, a little apart from the Moslem host, an encampment of Spanish cavaliers, with the banner of Count Julian waving above their tents. They were ten thousand in number, valiant and hardy men, the most experienced of Spanish soldiery, most of them having served in the African wars; they were well armed and appointed also, with the weapons of which the count had beguiled his sovereign: and it was a grievous sight to behold such good soldiers arrayed against their country and their faith.

The Christians pitched their tents about the hour of vespers, at a short league distant from the enemy, and remained gazing with anxiety and awe upon this barbaric host that had caused such terror and desolation in the land: for the first sight of a hostile encampment in a country disused to war is terrible to the newly enlisted soldier. A marvellous occurrence is recorded by the Arabian chroniclers as having taken place in the Christian camp; but discreet Spanish writers relate it with much modification, and consider it a stratagem of the wily Bishop Oppas, to sound the loyalty of the Christian cavaliers.

As several leaders of the army were seated with the bishop in his tent, conversing on the dubious fortunes of the approaching contest, an ancient pilgrim appeared at the entrance. He was bowed down with years, his snowy beard descended to his girdle, and he supported his tottering steps with a palmer's staff. The cavaliers rose and received him with great reverence as he advanced within the tent. Holding up his withered hand, "Woe, woe to Spain!" exclaimed he, "for the vial of the wrath of heaven is about to be

* This name was given to it subsequently by the Arabs. It signifies the River of Death. Vide Pedraza, Hist. Granad. p. 3. c. 1.

poured out. Listen, warriors, and take warning. Four months since, having performed my pilgrimage to the sepulchre of our Lord in Palestine, I was on my return towards my native land. Wearied and wayworn, I lay down one night to sleep beneath a palm tree, by the side of a fountain, when I was awakened by a voice saying unto me in soft accents, 'Son of sorrow, why sleepest thou?' I opened my eyes and beheld one of a fair and beauteous countenance, in shining apparel and with glorious wings, standing by the fountain; and I said, 'Who art thou who callest upon me in this deep hour of the night?'"

"'Fear not,' replied the stranger, 'I am an angel from heaven, sent to reveal unto thee the fate of thy country. Behold the sins of Roderick have come up before God, and his anger is kindled against him, and he has given him up to be invaded and destroyed. Hasten then to Spain, and seek the camp of thy countrymen. Warn them that such only shall be saved as shall abandon Roderick; but those who adhere to him shall share his punishment, and shall fall under the sword of the invader.'"

The pilgrim ceased, and passed forth from the tent; certain of the cavaliers followed him to detain him, that they might converse further with him about these matters, but he was nowhere to be found. The sentinel before the tent said, "I saw no one come forth, but it was as if a blast of wind passed by me, and there was a rustling as of dry leaves."

The cavaliers remained looking upon each other with astonishment. The Bishop Oppas sat with his eyes fixed upon the ground, and shadowed by his overhanging brow. At length, breaking silence, in a low and faltering voice, "Doubtless," said he, "this message is from God; and since he has taken compassion upon us, and given us notice of his impending judgment, it behoves us to hold grave council, and determine how best we may accomplish his will, and avert his displeasure."

The chiefs still remained silent as men confounded. Among them was a veteran noble named Pelistes. He had distinguished himself in the African wars, fighting side by side with Count Julian, but the latter had never dared to tamper with his faith, for he knew his stern integrity. Pelistes had brought with him to the camp his only son, who had never drawn a sword except in tourney. When the young

man saw that the veterans held their peace, the blood mantled in his cheek, and, overcoming his modesty, he broke forth with a generous warmth: "I know not, cavaliers," said he, "what is passing in your minds, but I believe this pilgrim to be an envoy from the devil; for none else could have given such dastard and perfidious counsel. For my own part, I stand ready to defend my king, my country, and my faith. I know no higher duty than this, and if God thinks to strike me dead in the performance of it, his sovereign will be done!"

When the young man had risen to speak, his father had fixed his eyes upon him with a grave and stern demeanour, leaning upon a two-handed sword. As soon as the youth had finished, Pelistes embraced him with a father's fondness. "Thou hast spoken well, my son," said he; "if I held my peace at the counsel of this losel pilgrim, it was but to hear thy opinion, and to learn whether thou wert worthy of thy lineage and of the training I had given thee. Hadst thou counselled otherwise than thou hast done, hadst thou shown thyself craven and disloyal, so help me God, I would have struck off thy head with this weapon which I hold in my hand. But thou hast counselled like a loyal and a Christian knight, and I thank God for having given me a son worthy to perpetuate the honours of my line. As to this pilgrim, be he saint or be he devil, I care not; this much I promise, that if I am to die in defence of my country and my king, my life shall be a costly purchase to the foe. Let each man make the same resolve, and I trust we shall yet prove the pilgrim a lying prophet." The words of Pelistes roused the spirits of many of the cavaliers; others, however, remained full of anxious forboding, and when this fearful prophecy was rumoured about the camp, as it presently was by the emissaries of the bishop, it spread awe and dismay among the soldiery.

CHAPTER XV.

On the following day, the two armies remained regarding each other with wary but menacing aspect. About noontide, King Roderick sent forth a chosen force of five hundred horse and two hundred foot, the best armed of his host, to skirmish with the enemy, that, by gaining some partial advantage, they might raise the spirits of the army. They were

led on by Theodomir, the same Gothic noble who had signalised himself by first opposing the invasion of the Moslems.

The Christian squadrons paraded with flying pennons in the valley which lay between the armies. The Arabs were not slow in answering their defiance. A large body of horsemen sallied forth to the encounter, together with three hundred of the followers of Count Julian. There was hot skirmishing about the field, and on the banks of the river; many gallant feats were displayed on either side, and many valiant warriors were slain. As the night closed in, the trumpets from either camp summoned the troops to retire from the combat. In this day's action the Christians suffered greatly in the loss of their distinguished cavaliers; for it is the noblest spirits who venture most, and lay themselves open to danger; and the Moslem soldiers had instructions to single out the leaders of the adverse host. All this is said to have been devised by the perfidious Bishop Oppas, who had secret communications with the enemy, while he influenced the councils of the king; and who trusted that by this skirmishing warfare the power of the Christian troops would be cut off, and the rest disheartened.

On the following morning, a larger force was ordered out to skirmish, and such of the soldiery as were unarmed, were commanded to stand ready to seize the horses and strip off the armour of the killed and wounded. Among the most illustrious of the warriors who fought that day was Pelistes, the Gothic noble who had so sternly checked the tongue of the Bishop Oppas. He led to the field a large body of his own vassals and retainers, and of cavaliers trained up in his house, who had followed him to the wars in Africa, and who looked up to him more as a father than a chieftain. Beside him was his only son, who now for the first time was fleshing his sword in battle. The conflict that day was more general and bloody than the day preceding; the slaughter of the Christian warriors was immense, from their lack of defensive armour; and as nothing could prevent the flower of the Gothic chivalry from spurring to the combat, the field was strewed with the bodies of the youthful nobles. None suffered more, however, than the warriors of Pelistes. Their leader himself was bold and hardy, and prone to expose himself to danger; but years and experience had moderated his early fire; his son, however, was eager to distinguish himself

in this, his first essay, and rushed with impetuous ardour into the hottest of the battle. In vain his father called to caution him; he was ever in the advance, and seemed unconscious of the perils that surrounded him. The cavaliers and vassals of his father followed him with devoted zeal, and many of them paid for their loyalty with their lives. When the trumpet sounded in the evening for retreat, the troops of Pelistes were the last to reach the camp. They came slowly and mournfully, and much decreased in number. Their veteran commander was seated on his war-horse, but the blood trickled from the greaves of his armour. His valiant son was borne on the shields of his vassals; when they laid him on the earth near to where the king was standing, they found that the heroic youth had expired of his wounds. The cavaliers surrounded the body and gave utterance to their grief; but the father restrained his agony, and looked on with the stern resignation of a soldier.

Don Roderick surveyed the field of battle with a rueful eye, for it was covered with the mangled bodies of his most illustrious warriors; he saw, too, with anxiety, that the common people, unused to war, and unsustained by discipline, were harassed by incessant toils and dangers, and were cooling in their zeal and courage.

The crafty Bishop Oppas marked the internal trouble of the king, and thought a favourable moment had arrived to sway him to his purpose. He called to his mind the various portents and prophecies which had forerun their present danger. "Let not my lord the king," said he, "make light of these mysterious revelations, which appear to be so disastrously fulfilling. The hand of Heaven appears to be against us. Destruction is impending over our heads. Our troops are rude and unskilful, but slightly armed, and much cast down in spirit. Better is it that we should make a treaty with the enemy, and, by granting part of his demands, prevent the utter ruin of our country. If such counsel be acceptable to my lord the king, I stand ready to depart upon an embassy to the Moslem camp."

Upon hearing these words, Pelistes, who had stood in mournful silence, regarding the dead body of his son, burst forth with honest indignation. "By this good sword," said he, "the man who yields such dastard counsel deserves death from the hand of his countrymen rather than from the foe;

and, were it not for the presence of the king, may I forfeit salvation if I would not strike him dead upon the spot."

The bishop turned an eye of venom upon Pelistes. "My lord," said he, "I, too, bear a weapon, and know how to wield it. Were the king not present, you would not dare to menace, nor should you advance one step without my hastening to meet you."

The king interposed between the jarring nobles, and rebuked the impetuosity of Pelistes, but at the same time rejected the counsel of the bishop. "The event of this conflict," said he, "is in the hand of God; but never shall my sword return to its scabbard while an infidel invader remains within the land."

He then held a council with his captains, and it was determined to offer the enemy general battle on the following day. A herald was despatched defying Taric ben Zeyad to the contest, and the defiance was gladly accepted by the Moslem chieftain.* Don Roderick then formed the plan of action, and assigned to each commander his several station, after which he dismissed his officers, and each one sought his tent, to prepare by diligence or repose for the next day's eventful contest.

CHAPTER XVI.

Taric ben Zeyad had been surprised by the valour of the Christian cavaliers in the recent battles, and at the number and apparent devotion of the troops which accompanied the king to the field. The confident defiance of Don Roderick increased his surprise. When the herald had retired, he turned an eye of suspicion on Count Julian. "Thou hast represented thy countrymen," said he, "as sunk in effeminacy and lost to all generous impulse; yet I find them fighting with the courage and the strength of lions. Thou hast represented thy king as detested by his subjects, and surrounded by secret treason, but I behold his tents whitening the hills and dales, while thousands are hourly flocking to his standard. Woe unto thee if thou hast dealt deceitfully with us, or betrayed us with guileful words."

Don Julian retired to his tent in great trouble of mind, and fear came upon him that the Bishop Oppas might play him false; for it is the lot of traitors ever to distrust each other. He

* Bleda, Crónica.

called to him the same page who had brought him the letter from Florinda, revealing the story of her dishonour.

"Thou knowest, my trusty page," said he, "that I have reared thee in my household, and cherished thee above all thy companions. If thou hast loyalty and affection for thy lord, now is the time to serve him. Hie thee to the Christian camp, and find thy way to the tent of the Bishop Oppas. If any one ask thee who thou art, tell them thou art of the household of the bishop, and bearer of missives from Cordova. When thou art admitted to the presence of the bishop, show him this ring, and he will commune with thee in secret. Then tell him Count Julian greets him as a brother, and demands how the wrongs of his daughter Florinda are to be redressed. Mark well his reply, and bring it word for word. Have thy lips closed, but thine eyes and ears open; and observe every thing of note in the camp of the king. So, speed thee on thy errand—away, away!"

The page hastened to saddle a Barbary steed, fleet as the wind, and of a jet black colour, so as not to be easily discernible in the night. He girded on a sword and dagger, slung an Arab bow with a quiver of arrows at his side, and a buckler at his shoulder. Issuing out of the camp, he sought the banks of the Guadalete, and proceeded silently along its stream, which reflected the distant fires of the Christian camp. As he passed by the place which had been the scene of the recent conflict, he heard, from time to time, the groan of some expiring warrior who had crawled among the reeds on the margin of the river; and sometimes his steed stepped cautiously over the mangled bodies of the slain. The young page was unused to the sights of war, and his heart beat quick within him. He was hailed by the sentinels as he approached the Christian camp, and, on giving the reply taught him by Count Julian, was conducted to the tent of the Bishop Oppas.

The bishop had not yet retired to his couch. When he beheld the ring of Count Julian, and heard the words of his message, he saw that the page was one in whom he might confide. "Hasten back to thy lord," said he, "and tell him to have faith in me, and all shall go well. As yet, I have kept my troops out of the combat. They are all fresh, well armed, and well appointed. The king has confided to myself, aided by the princes Evan and Siseburto, the command of a

wing of the army. To-morrow, at the hour of noon, when both armies are in the heat of action, we will pass over with our forces to the Moslems. But I claim the compact made with Taric ben Zeyad, that my nephews be placed in dominion over Spain, and tributary only to the Caliph of Damascus."

With this traitorous message the page departed. He led his black steed by the bridle to present less mark for observation, as he went stumbling along near the expiring fires of the camp. On passing the last outpost, when the guards were half slumbering on their arms, he was overheard and summoned, but leaped lightly into the saddle and put spurs to his steed. An arrow whistled by his ear, and two more stuck in the target which he had thrown upon his back. The clatter of swift hoofs echoed behind him, but he had learnt of the Arabs to fight and fly. Plucking a shaft from his quiver, and turning and rising in the stirrups as his courser galloped at full speed, he drew the arrow to the head and launched it at his pursuer. The twang of the bow-string was followed by the crash of armour, and a deep groan, as the horseman tumbled to the earth. The page pursued his course without further molestation, and arrived at the Moslem camp before the break of day.

CHAPTER XVII.

A LIGHT had burned throughout the night in the tent of the king, and anxious thoughts and dismal visions troubled his repose. If he fell into a slumber, he beheld in his dreams the shadowy phantoms of the necromantic tower, or the injured Florinda, pale and dishevelled, imprecating the vengeance of Heaven upon his head. In the midwatches of the night, when all was silent except the footstep of the sentinel, pacing before his tent, the king rose from his couch, and walking forth, looked thoughtfully upon the martial scene before him. The pale crescent of the moon hung over the Moorish camp, and dimly lighted up the windings of the Guadalete. The heart of the king was heavy and oppressed; but he felt only for himself, says Antonio Agapida; he thought nothing of the perils impending over the thousands of devoted subjects in the camp below him; sleeping, as it were, on the margin of their graves. The faint clatter of distant hoofs, as if in rapid flight, reached the monarch's ear, but the horsemen

were not to be descried. At that very hour, and along the shadowy banks of that river, here and there gleaming with the scanty moonlight, passed the fugitive messenger of Count Julian, with the plan of the next day's treason.

The day had not yet dawned, when the sleepless and impatient monarch summoned his attendants and arrayed himself for the field. He then sent for the venerable Bishop Urbino, who had accompanied him to the camp, and, laying aside his regal crown, he knelt with head uncovered, and confessed his sins before the holy man. After this a solemn mass was performed in the royal tent, and the eucharist administered to the monarch. When these ceremonies were concluded, he besought the archbishop to depart forthwith for Cordova, there to await the issue of the battle, and to be ready to bring forward re-inforcements and supplies. The archbishop saddled his mule and departed just as the faint blush of morning began to kindle in the east. Already the camp resounded with the thrilling call of the trumpet, the clank of armour, and the tramp and neigh of steeds. As the archbishop passed through the camp, he looked with a compassionate heart on this vast multitude, of whom so many were soon to perish. The warriors pressed to kiss his hand, and many a cavalier full of youth and fire received his benediction, who was to lie stiff and cold before the evening.

When the troops were marshalled for the field, Don Roderick prepared to sally forth in the state and pomp with which the Gothic kings were wont to go to battle. He was arrayed in robes of gold brocade; his sandals were embroidered with pearls and diamonds; he had a sceptre in his hand, and he wore a regal crown resplendent with inestimable jewels. Thus gorgeously apparelled, he ascended a lofty chariot of ivory, the axletrees of which were of silver, and the wheels and pole covered with plates of burnished gold. Above his head was a canopy of cloth of gold, embossed with armorial devices, and studded with precious stones.* This sumptuous chariot was drawn by milk-white horses, with caparisons of crimson velvet, embroidered with pearls. A thousand youthful cavaliers surrounded the car; all of the noblest blood and bravest spirit; all knighted by the king's own hand, and sworn to defend him to the last.

When Roderick issued forth in this resplendent state, says

* Eutrand. Chron. an. Christ. 714.

an Arabian writer, surrounded by his guards in gilded armour and waving plumes, and scarfs and surcoats of a thousand dyes, it was as if the sun were emerging in the dazzling chariot of the day from amidst the glorious clouds of morning.

As the royal car rolled along in front of the squadrons, the soldiers shouted with admiration. Don Roderick waved his sceptre, and addressed them from his lofty throne, reminding them of the horror and desolation which had already been spread through the land by the invaders. He called upon them to summon up the ancient valour of their race and avenge the blood of their brethren. "One day of glorious fighting," said he, "and this infidel horde will be driven into the sea, or will perish beneath your swords. Forward bravely to the fight; your families are behind you—praying for your success; the invaders of your country are before you; God is above to bless his holy cause, and your king leads you to the field." The army shouted with one accord, "Forward, to the foe, and death be his portion who shuns the encounter!"

The rising sun began to shine along the glistening waters of the Guadalete as the Moorish army, squadron after squadron, came sweeping down a gentle declivity to the sound of martial music. Their turbans and robes, of various dyes and fashions, gave a splendid appearance to their host: as they marched, a cloud of dust arose and partly hid them from the sight, but still there would break forth flashes of steel and gleams of burnished gold, like rays of vivid lightning; while the sound of drum and trumpet, and the clash of Moorish cymbal, were as the warlike thunder within that stormy cloud of battle.

As the armies drew near each other, the sun disappeared among gathering clouds, and the gloom of the day was increased by the columns of dust which rose from either host. At length the trumpets sounded for the encounter. The battle commenced with showers of arrows, stones, and javelins. The Christian foot soldiers fought to disadvantage, the greater part being destitute of helm or buckler. A battalion of light Arabian horsemen, led by a Greek renegado named Magued el Rumi, careered in front of the Christian line, launching their darts, and then wheeling off beyond the reach of the missiles hurled after them. Theodomir now brought up his seasoned troops into the action, seconded by the veteran

Pelistes, and in a little while the battle became furious and promiscuous. It was glorious to behold the old Gothic valour shining forth in this hour of fearful trial. Wherever the Moslems fell, the Christians rushed forward, seized upon their horses, and stripped them of their armour and their weapons. They fought desperately and successfully, for they fought for their country and their faith. The battle raged for several hours; the field was strewn with slain, and the Moors, overcome by the multitude and fury of their foes, began to falter.

When Taric beheld his troops retreating before the eneny, he threw himself before them, and, rising in his stirrups, "Oh, Moslems! conquerors of Africa!" cried he, "whither would you fly? The sea is behind you, the enemy before; you have no hope but in your valour and the help of God. Do as I do, and the day is ours!"

With these words, he put spurs to his horse and sprang among the enemy, striking to right and left, cutting down and destroying, while his steed, fierce as himself, trampled upon the foot soldiers, and tore them with his teeth. At this moment a mighty shout arose in various parts of the field; the noontide hour had arrived. The Bishop Oppas with the two princes, who had hitherto kept their bands out of the fight, suddenly went over to the enemy, and turned their weapons upon their astonished countrymen. From that moment the fortune of the day was changed, and the field of battle became a scene of wild confusion and bloody massacre. The Christians knew not whom to contend with, or whom to trust. It seemed as if madness had seized upon their friends and kinsmen, and that their worst enemies were among themselves.

The courage of Don Roderick rose with his danger. Throwing off the cumbrous robes of royalty and descending from his car, he sprang upon his steed Orelia, grasped his lance and buckler, and endeavoured to rally his retreating troops. He was surrounded and assailed by a multitude of his own traitorous subjects, but defended himself with wondrous prowess. The enemy thickened around him; his loyal band of cavaliers were slain, bravely fighting in his defence; the last that was seen of the king was in the midst of the enemy, dealing death at every blow.

A complete panic fell upon the Christians; they threw

away their arms and fled in all directions. They were pursued with dreadful slaughter, until the darkness of the night rendered it impossible to distinguish friend from foe. Taric then called off his troops from the pursuit, and took possession of the royal camp; and the couch which had been pressed so uneasily on the preceding night by Don Roderick, now yielded sound repose to his conqueror.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON the morning after the battle, the Arab leader, Taric ben Zeyad, rode over the bloody field of the Guadalete, strewed with the ruins of those splendid armies, which had so lately passed like glorious pageants along the river banks. There Moor and Christian, horseman and horse, lay gashed with hideous wounds; and the river, still red with blood, was filled with the bodies of the slain. The gaunt Arab was as a wolf roaming through the fold he had laid waste. On every side his eye revelled on the ruin of the country, on the wrecks of haughty Spain. There lay the flower of her youthful chivalry, mangled and destroyed, and the strength of her yeomanry prostrated in the dust. The Gothic noble lay confounded with his vassals; the peasant with the prince; all ranks and dignities were mingled in one bloody massacre.

When Taric had surveyed the field, he caused the spoils of the dead and the plunder of the camp to be brought before him. The booty was immense. There were massy chains, and rare jewels of gold; pearls and precious stones; rich silks and brocades, and all other luxurious decorations in which the Gothic nobles had indulged in the latter times of their degeneracy. A vast amount of treasure was likewise found, which had been brought by Roderick for the expenses of the war.

Taric then ordered that the bodies of the Moslem warriors should be interred; as for those of the Christians, they were gathered in heaps, and vast pyres of wood were formed, on which they were consumed. The flames of these pyres rose high in the air, and were seen afar off in the night; and when the Christians beheld them from the neighbouring hills they beat their breasts and tore their hair, and lamented

* This battle is called indiscriminately by historians the battle of Guadalete, or Xeres, from the neighbourhood of that city.

over them as over the funeral fires of their country. The carnage of that battle infected the air for two whole months, and bones were seen lying in heaps upon the field for more than forty years; nay, when ages had past and gone, the husbandman, turning up the soil, would still find fragments of Gothic cuirasses and helms, and Moorish scimitars, the relics of that dreadful fight.

For three days the Arabian horsemen pursued the flying Christians, hunting them over the face of the country; so that but a scanty number of that mighty host escaped to tell the tale of their disaster.

Taric ben Zeyad considered his victory incomplete so long as the Gothic monarch survived; he proclaimed great rewards, therefore, to whomsoever should bring Roderick to him, dead or alive. A diligent search was accordingly made in every direction, but for a long time in vain; at length a soldier brought to Taric the head of a Christian warrior, on which was a cap decorated with feathers and precious stones. The Arab leader received it as the head of the unfortunate Roderick, and sent it as a trophy of his victory, to Muza ben Nosier, who, in like manner, transmitted it to the caliph at Damascus. The Spanish historians, however, have always denied its identity.

A mystery has ever hung, and ever must continue to hang, over the fate of King Roderick, in that dark and doleful day of Spain. Whether he went down amidst the storm of battle, and atoned for his sins and errors by a patriot grave, or whether he survived to repent of them in hermit exile, must remain matter of conjecture and dispute. The learned Archbishop Rodrigo, who has recorded the events of this disastrous field, affirms that Roderick fell beneath the vengeful blade of the traitor Julian, and thus expiated with his blood his crime against the hapless Florinda; but the archbishop stands alone in his record of the fact. It seems generally admitted that Orelia, the favourite war-horse of Don Roderick, was found entangled in a marsh on the borders of the Guadalete, with the sandals, and mantle, and royal insignia of the king lying close by him. The river at this place ran broad and deep, and was encumbered with the dead bodies of warriors and steeds; it has been supposed, therefore, that he perished in the stream; but his body was not found within its waters.

When several years had passed away, and men's minds,

being restored to some degree of tranquillity, began to occupy themselves about the events of this dismal day, a rumour arose that Roderick had escaped from the carnage on the banks of the Guadalete, and was still alive. It was said, that having from a rising ground caught a view of the whole field of battle, and seen that the day was lost, and his army flying in all directions, he likewise sought his safety in flight. It is added, that the Arab horsemen, while scouring the mountains in quest of fugitives, found a shepherd arrayed in the royal robes, and brought him before the conqueror, believing him to be the king himself. Count Julian soon dispelled the error. On being questioned, the trembling rustic declared that while tending his sheep in the folds of the mountains, there came a cavalier on a horse wearied and spent, and ready to sink beneath the spur; that the cavalier, with an authoritative voice and menacing air, commanded him to exchange garments with him, and clad himself in his rude garb of sheep-skin, and took his crook and his scrip of provisions, and continued up the rugged defiles of the mountains leading towards Castile, until he was lost to view.*

This tradition was fondly cherished by many, who clung to the belief in the existence of their monarch as their main hope for the redemption of Spain. It was even affirmed that he had taken refuge, with many of his host, in an island of the "Ocean sea," from whence he might yet return once more to elevate his standard, and battle for the recovery of his throne.

Year after year, however, elapsed, and nothing was heard of Don Roderick; yet, like Sebastian of Portugal, and Arthur of England, his name continued to be a rallying point for popular faith, and the mystery of his end to give rise to romantic fables. At length, when generation after generation had sunk into the grave, and near two centuries had passed and gone, traces were said to be discovered that threw a light on the final fortunes of the unfortunate Roderick. At that time, Don Alphonso the Great, King of Leon, had wrested the city of Visco, in Lusitania, from the hands of the Moslems. As his soldiers were ranging about the city and its environs, one of them discovered in a field, outside of the walls, a small chapel or hermitage, with a sepulchre in.

* Bleda, Cron. lib. ii. cap. 9. Abulcasim Tarif Abentarique, lib. i cap. 10.

front, on which was inscribed this epitaph, in Gothic characters:—

HIC REQUIESCIT RUDERICUS
ULTIMUS REX GOTHORUM.

Here lies Roderick,
The last king of the Goths.

It has been believed by many that this was the veritable tomb of the monarch, and that in this hermitage he had finished his days in solitary penance. The warrior, as he contemplated the supposed tomb of the once haughty Roderick, forgot all his faults and errors, and shed a soldier's tear over his memory; but when his thoughts turned to Count Julian, his patriotic indignation broke forth, and with his dagger he inscribed a rude malediction on the stone.

"Accursed," said he, "be the impious and headlong vengeance of the traitor Julian. He was a murderer of his king; a destroyer of his kindred; a betrayer of his country. May his name be bitter in every mouth, and his memory infamous to all generations."

Here ends the legend of Don Roderick.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE FOREGOING LEGEND.

THE TOMB OF RODERICK.

The venerable Sebastiano, Bishop of Salamanca, declares that the inscription on the tomb at Visco, in Portugal, existed in his time, and that he had seen it. A particular account of the exile and hermit life of Roderick is furnished by Berganza, on the authority of Portuguese chronicles.

Algunos historiadores Portugueses asseguran, que el Rey Rodrigo, perdida la battalla, huyo a tierra de Merida, y se recogio en el monasterio de Cauliniano, en donde, arrepentido de sus culpas, procuro confessarlas con muchas lagrimas. Deseando mas retiro, y escogiendo por compañero a un monge llamado Roman, y elevando la Imagen de Nazareth, que Cyriaco monge de nacion griego avra traido de Jerusalem al monasterio de Cauliniano, se subio á un monte muy aspero, que estaba sobre el mar, junto al lugar de Peyemeyra. Vivio Rodrigo en compania de el monge en el hueco de una gruta por espacio de un año; despues se passo á la ermita de san Miguel, que estaba cerca de Viseo, en donde murió y fue sepultado.

Puedese ver esta relacion en las notas de Don Thomas Tamayo sobre Paulo deacano. El chronicon de san Millan, que llega hasta el año 883, deze que, hasta su tiempo, si ignora el fin del Rey Rodrigo. Pocos años despues el Rey Don Alonzo el Magno, aviéndo ganado la ciudad de Visco, encontro en una iglesia el epitafio que en romance dize—aqui yaze Rodrigo, ultimo Rey de los Godos.—Berganza, lib. 1, cap. 13.

THE CAVE OF HERCULES

As the story of the necromantic tower is one of the most famous as well as least credible points in the history of Don Roderick, it may be well to fortify or buttress it by some account of another marvel of the city of Toledo. This ancient city, which dates its existence almost from the time of the flood, claiming as its founder Tubal, the son of Japhet, and grandson of Noah,* has been the warrior hold of many generations, and a strange diversity of races. It bears traces of the artifices and devices of its various occupants, and is full of mysteries, and subjects for antiquarian conjecture and perplexity. It is built upon a high, rocky promontory, with the Tagus brawling round its base, and is overlooked by cragged and precipitous hills. These hills abound with clefts and caverns; and the promontory itself, on which the city is built, bears traces of vaults and subterraneous habitations, which are occasionally discovered under the ruins of ancient houses, or beneath the churches and convents.

These are supposed by some to have been the habitations or retreats of the primitive inhabitants; for it was the custom of the ancients, according to Pliny, to make caves in high and rocky places, and live in them through fear of floods; and such a precaution, says the worthy Don Pedro de Roxas, in his history of Toledo, was natural enough among the first Toledans, seeing that they founded their city shortly after the deluge, while the memory of it was still fresh in their minds.

Some have supposed these secret caves and vaults to have been places of concealment of the inhabitants and their treasure, during times of war and violence; or rude temples for the performance of religious ceremonies in times of persecution. There are not wanting other, and grave writers, who give them a still darker purpose. In these caves, say

* Salazar, Hist. Gran. Cardinal Prologo. Vol. I. plan 1.

they, were taught the diabolical mysteries of magic; and here were performed those infernal ceremonies and incantations, horrible in the eyes of God and man. "History," says the worthy Don Pedro de Roxas, "is full of accounts that the magi taught and performed their magic and their superstitious rites in profound caves and secret places; because as this art of the devil was prohibited from the very origin of Christianity, they always sought for hidden places in which to practice it." In the time of the Moors this art, we are told, was publicly taught at their universities, the same as astronomy, philosophy, and mathematics, and at no place was it cultivated with more success than at Toledo. Hence this city has ever been darkly renowned for mystic science; insomuch that the magic art was called by the French, and by other nations, the Arte Toledana.

Of all the marvels, however, of this ancient, picturesque, romantic, and necromantic city, none in modern times surpass the cave of Hercules, if we may take the account of Don Pedro de Roxas for authentic. The entrance to this cave is within the church of San Gines, situated in nearly the highest part of the city. The portal is secured by massive doors, opening within the walls of the church, but which are kept rigorously closed. The cavern extends under the city and beneath the bed of the Tagus to the distance of three leagues beyond. It is, in some places, of rare architecture, built of small stones curiously wrought, and supported by columns and arches.

In the year 1546 an account of this cavern was given to the archbishop and cardinal Don Juan Martinez Siliceo, who, desirous of examining it, ordered the entrance to be cleaned. A number of persons furnished with provisions, lanterns, and cords, then went in, and having proceeded about half a league, came to a place where there was a kind of chapel or temple, having a table or altar, with several statues of bronze in niches or on pedestals.

While they were regarding this mysterious scene of ancient worship or incantation, one of the statues fell, with a noise that echoed through the cavern, and smote the hearts of the adventurers with terror. Recovering from their alarm they proceeded onward, but were soon again dismayed by a roaring and rushing sound that increased as they advanced. It was made by a furious and turbulent stream, the dark waters of which were too deep, and broad, and rapid to be crossed. By

this time their hearts were so chilled they could not seek any other passage by which they might advance; so they turned back and hastened out of the cave. It was night-fall when they sallied forth, and they were so much affected by the terror they had undergone, and by the cold and damp air of the cavern, to which they were the more sensible from its being in the summer, that all of them fell sick, and several of them died. Whether the archbishop was encouraged to pursue his research and gratify his curiosity, the history does not mention.

Alonzo Telles de Meneses, in his history of the world, records, that not long before his time a boy of Toledo, being threatened with punishment by his master, fled and took refuge in this cave. Fancying his pursuer at his heels, he took no heed of the obscurity or coldness of the cave, but kept groping and blundering forward, until he came forth at three leagues distance from the city.

Another and very popular story of this cave, current among the common people, was, that in its remote recesses lay concealed a great treasure of gold, left there by the Romans. Whoever would reach this precious hoard must pass through several caves or grottos; each having its particular terror, and all under the guardianship of a ferocious dog, who has the key of all the gates, and watches day and night. At the approach of any one, he shows his teeth, and makes a hideous growling; but no adventurer after wealth has had courage to brave a contest with this terrific cerberus.

The most intrepid candidate on record was a poor man who had lost his all, and had those grand incentives to desperate enterprise, a wife and a large family of children. Hearing the story of this cave, he determined to venture alone in search of the treasure. He accordingly entered, and wandered many hours, bewildered, about the cave. Often would he have returned, but the thoughts of his wife and children urged him on. At length he arrived near to the place where he supposed the treasure lay hidden; but here, to his dismay, he beheld the floor of the cavern strewn with human bones; doubtless the remains of adventurers like himself, who had been torn to pieces.

Losing all courage, he now turned and sought his way out of the cave. Horrors thickened upon him as he fled. He beheld direful phantoms glaring and gibbering around him,

and heard the sound of pursuit in the echoes of his footsteps. He reached his home overcome with affright; several hours elapsed before he could recover speech to tell his story, and he died on the following day.

The judicious Don Pedro de Roxas holds the account of the buried treasure for fabulous, but the adventure of this unlucky man for very possible; being led on by avarice, or rather the hope of retrieving a desperate fortune. He, moreover, pronounces his dying shortly after coming forth, as very probable; because the darkness of the cave, its coldness, the fright at finding the bones, the dread of meeting the imaginary dog, all joining to operate upon a man who was past the prime of his days, and enfeebled by poverty and scanty food, might easily cause his death.

Many have considered this cave as intended originally for a sally or retreat from the city in case it should be taken; an opinion rendered probable, it is thought, by its grandeur and great extent.

The learned Salazar de Mendoza, however, in his history of the grand cardinal of Spain, affirms it as an established fact, that it was first wrought out of the rock by Tubal, the son of Japhet, and grandson of Noah; and afterwards repaired and greatly augmented by Hercules the Egyptian, who made it his habitation after he had erected his pillars at the straits of Gibraltar. Here, too, it is said, he read magic to his followers, and taught them those supernatural arts by which he accomplished his vast achievements. Others think that it was a temple dedicated to Hercules; as was the case, according to Pomponius Mela, with the great cave in the rock of Gibraltar; certain it is, that it has always borne the name of "The Cave of Hercules."

There are not wanting some who have insinuated that it was a work dating from the time of the Romans, and intended as a cloaca or sewer of the city; but such a grovelling insinuation will be treated with proper scorn by the reader, after the nobler purposes to which he has heard this marvellous cavern consecrated.

From all the circumstances here adduced from learned and reverend authors, it will be perceived that Toledo is a city fruitful of marvels, and that the necromantic tower of Hercules has more solid foundation than most edifices of similar import in ancient history.

The writer of these pages will venture to add the result of his personal researches respecting the far-famed cavern in question. Rambling about Toledo in the year 1826, in company with a small knot of antiquity hunters, among whom was an eminent British painter,* and an English nobleman,† who has since distinguished himself in Spanish historical research, we directed our steps to the church of San Gines, and inquired for the portal of the secret cavern. The sacristan was a voluble and communicative man, and one not likely to be niggard of his tongue about anything he knew, or slow to boast of any marvel pertaining to his church; but he professed utter ignorance of the existence of any such portal. He remembered to have heard, however, that immediately under the entrance to the church there was an arch of mason-work, apparently the upper part of some subterranean portal; but that all had been covered up, and a pavement laid down thereon; so that whether it led to the magic cave or the necromantic tower remains a mystery, and so must remain until some monarch or archbishop shall again have courage and authority to break the spell.

LEGEND OF THE SUBJUGATION OF SPAIN.‡

CHAPTER I.

The overthrow of King Roderick and his army on the banks of the Guadalete, threw open all southern Spain to the inroads of the Moslems. The whole country fled before them; villages and hamlets were hastily abandoned; the inhabitants placed their aged and infirm, their wives and children, and their most precious effects, on mules and other

* Mr. D. W—kie. † Lord Mah—n.

‡ In this legend most of the facts respecting the Arab inroads into Spain are on the authority of Arabian writers who had the most accurate means of information. Those relative to the Spaniards are chiefly from old Spanish chronicles. It is to be remarked that the Arab accounts have most the air of verity, and the events, as they relate them, are in the ordinary course of common life. The Spanish accounts, on the contrary, are full of the marvellous; for there were no greater romancers than the monkish chroniclers.

beasts of burden, and, driving before them their flocks and herds, made for distant parts of the land; for the fastnesses of the mountains, and for such of the cities as yet possessed walls and bulwarks. Many gave out, faint and weary, by the way, and fell into the hands of the enemy; others, at the distant sight of a turban or a Moslem standard, or on hearing the clangour of a trumpet, abandoned their flocks and herds, and hastened their flight with their families. If their pursuers gained upon them, they threw by their household goods and whatever was of burden, and thought themselves fortunate to escape, naked and destitute, to a place of refuge. Thus the roads were covered with scattered flocks and herds, and with spoil of all kind.

The Arabs, however, were not guilty of wanton cruelty or ravage; on the contrary, they conducted themselves with a moderation but seldom witnessed in more civilised conquerors. Taric el Tuerto, though a thorough man of the sword, and one whose whole thoughts were warlike, yet evinced wonderful judgment and discretion. He checked the predatory habits of his troops with a rigorous hand. They were forbidden, under pain of severe punishment, to molest any peaceable and unfortified towns, or any unarmed and unresisting people who remained quiet in their homes. No spoil was permitted to be made excepting in fields of battle, in camps of routed foes, or in cities taken by the sword.

Taric had little need to exercise his severity; his orders were obeyed through love, rather than fear, for he was the idol of his soldiery. They admired his restless and daring spirit, which nothing could dismay. His gaunt and sinewy form, his fiery eye, his visage seamed with scars, were suited to the hardihood of his deeds; and when mounted on his foaming steed, careering the field of battle with quivering lance or flashing scimitar, his Arabs would greet him with shouts of enthusiasm. But what endeared him to them more than all was his soldierlike contempt of gain. Conquest was his only passion; glory the only reward he coveted. As to the spoil of the conquered, he shared it freely among his followers, and squandered his own portion with open-handed generosity.

While Taric was pushing his triumphant course through Andalusia, tidings of his stupendous victory on the banks of the Guadalete were carried to Muza ben Nozier. Messengers

after messengers arrived, vyeing who should most extol the achievements of the conqueror and the grandeur of the conquest. "Taric," said they, "has overthrown the whole force of the unbelievers in one mighty battle. Their king is slain; thousands and tens of thousands of their warriors are destroyed; the whole land lies at our mercy; and city after city is surrendering to the victorious arms of Taric."

The heart of Muza ben Nozier sickened at these tidings, and, instead of rejoicing at the success of the cause of Islam, he trembled with jealous fear lest the triumphs of Taric in Spain should eclipse his own victories in Africa. He despatched missives to the Caliph Waled Almanzor, informing him of these new conquests, but taking the whole glory to himself, and making no mention of the services of Taric; or, at least, only mentioning him incidentally as a subordinate commander. "The battles," said he, "have been terrible as the day of judgment; but, by the aid of Allah, we have gained the victory."

He then prepared in all haste to cross over into Spain and assume the command of the conquering army; and he wrote a letter in advance to interrupt Taric in the midst of his career. "Wherever this letter may find thee," said he, "I charge thee halt with thy army and await my coming. Thy force is inadequate to the subjugation of the land, and by rashly venturing thou mayst lose everything. I will be with thee speedily, with a reinforcement of troops competent to so great an enterprise."

The letter overtook the veteran Taric while in the full glow of triumphant success, having overrun some of the richest part of Andalusia, and just received the surrender of the city of Ecija. As he read the letter, the blood mantled in his sunburnt cheek, and fire kindled in his eye; for he penetrated the motives of Muza. He suppressed his wrath, however, and turning with a bitter expression of forced composure to his captains, "Unsaddle your steeds," said he, "and plant your lances in the earth; set up your tents and take your repose: for we must await the coming of the Wali with a mighty force to assist us in our conquest."

The Arab warriors broke forth with loud murmurs at these words: "What need have we of aid," cried they, "when the whole country is flying before us; and what better commander can we have than Taric to lead us on to victory?"

Count Julian, also, who was present, now hastened to give his traitorous counsel.

"Why pause," cried he, "at this precious moment? The great army of the Goths is vanquished, and their nobles are slaughtered or dispersed. Follow up your blow before the land can recover from its panic. Overrun the provinces, seize upon the cities, make yourself master of the capital, and your conquest is complete."*

The advice of Julian was applauded by all the Arab chieftains, who were impatient of any interruption in their career of conquest. Taric was easily persuaded to what was the wish of his heart. Disregarding the letter of Muza, therefore, he prepared to pursue his victories. For this purpose he ordered a review of his troops on the plain of Ecija. Some were mounted on steeds which they had brought from Africa; the rest he supplied with horses taken from the Christians. He repeated his general orders, that they should inflict no wanton injury, nor plunder any place that offered no resistance. They were forbidden also to encumber themselves with booty, or even with provisions; but were to scour the country with all speed, and seize upon all its fortresses and strong-holds.

He then divided his host into three several armies. One he placed under the command of the Greek renegado, Magued el Rumi, a man of desperate courage; and sent it against the ancient city of Cordova. Another was sent against the city of Malaga, and was led by Zaid ben Kesadi, aided by the Bishop Oppas. The third was led by Taric himself, and with this he determined to make a wide sweep through the kingdom.†

CHAPTER II.

The terror of the arms of Taric ben Zeyad went before him; and, at the same time, the report of his lenity to those who submitted without resistance. Wherever he appeared, the towns, for the most part, sent forth some of their principal inhabitants to proffer a surrender; for they were destitute of fortifications, and their fighting men had perished in battle. They were all received into allegiance to the caliph, and were protected from pillage or molestation.

* Condé, p. i. cap. 10.

† Cronica de España, de Alonzo el Sabio, p. iii. cap. 1.

After marching some distance through the country, he entered one day a vast and beautiful plain, interspersed with villages, adorned with groves and gardens, watered by winding rivers, and surrounded by lofty mountains. It was the famous vega, or plain of Granada, destined to be for ages the favourite abode of the Moslems. When the Arab conquerors beheld this delicious vega, they were lost in admiration; for it seemed as if the prophet had given them a paradise on earth, as a reward for their services in his cause.

Taric approached the city of Granada, which had a formidable aspect, seated on lofty hills, and fortified with Gothic walls and towers, and with the red castle or citadel built in times of old by the Phœnicians or the Romans. As the Arab chieftain eyed the place, he was pleased with its stern warrior look, contrasting with the smiling beauty of its vega, and the freshness and voluptuous abundance of its hills and valleys. He pitched his tent before its walls, and made preparations to attack it with all his force.

The city, however, bore but the semblance of power. The flower of its youth had perished in the battle of the Guadalete; many of the principal inhabitants had fled to the mountains, and few remained in the city excepting old men, women, and children, and a number of Jews, which last were well disposed to take part with the conquerors. The city, therefore, readily capitulated, and was received into vassalage on favourable terms. The inhabitants were to retain their property, their laws, and their religion; their churches and priests were to be respected; and no other tribute was required of them than such as they had been accustomed to pay to their Gothic kings.

On taking possession of Granada, Taric garrisoned the towers and castles, and left as alcayde, or governor, a chosen warrior named Betiz Aben Habuz, a native of Arabia Felix, who had distinguished himself by his valour and abilities. This alcayde subsequently made himself king of Granada, and built a palace on one of its hills; the remains of which may be seen at the present day.*

* The house shown as the ancient residence of Aben Habuz is called *La Casa del Gallo*, or the House of the Weathercock; so named, says Pedraza, in his History of Granada, from a bronze figure of an Arab horseman, armed with lance and buckler, which once surmounted it, and which varied with every wind. On this warlike weathercock was inscribed, in Arabic characters:—

Even the delights of Granada had no power to detain the active and ardent Taric. To the east of the city he beheld a lofty chain of mountains, towering to the sky, and crowned with shining snow. These were the "Mountains of the Sun and Air;" and the perpetual snows on their summits gave birth to streams that fertilised the plains. In their bosoms, shut up among cliffs and precipices, were many small valleys of great beauty and abundance. The inhabitants were a bold and hardy race, who looked upon their mountains as everlasting fortresses that could never be taken. The inhabitants of the surrounding country had fled to these natural fastnesses for refuge, and driven thither their flocks and herds.

Taric felt that the dominion he had acquired of the plains would be insecure until he had penetrated and subdued these haughty mountains. Leaving Aben Habuz, therefore, in command of Granada, he marched with his army across the vega, and entered the folds of the sierra, which stretch towards the south. The inhabitants fled with affright on hearing the Moorish trumpets, or beholding the approach of the turbaned horsemen, and plunged deeper into the recesses of their mountains. As the army advanced, the roads became more and more rugged and difficult; sometimes climbing great rocky heights, and at other times descending abruptly into deep ravines, the beds of winter torrents. The mountains were strangely wild and sterile; broken into cliffs and precipices of variegated marble. At their feet were little valleys enamelled with groves and gardens, interlaced with silver streams, and studded with villages and hamlets; but all deserted by their inhabitants. No one appeared to dispute the inroad of the Moslems, who continued their march with increasing confidence, their pennons fluttering from rock and cliff, and the valleys echoing to the din of trumpet, drum, and cymbal. At length they came to a defile where the

"Dice el sabio Aben Habuz
Que asi se defiende el Andaluz."
"In this way, says Aben Habuz the wise,
The Andalusian his foe defies."

The Casa del Gallo, even until within twenty years, possessed two great halls beautifully decorated with Morisco reliefs. It then caught fire, and was so damaged as to require to be nearly rebuilt. It is now a manufactory of coarse canvas, and has nothing of the Moorish character remaining. It commands a beautiful view of the city and the Vega.

mountains seemed to have been rent asunder to make way for a foaming torrent. The narrow and broken road wound along the dizzy edge of the precipices, until it came to where a bridge was thrown across the chasm. It was a fearful and gloomy pass; great beetling cliffs overhung the road, and the torrent roared below. This awful defile has ever been famous in the warlike history of those mountains, by the name, in former times, of the Barranco de Tocos, and at present of the bridge of Tablete. The Saracen army entered fearlessly into the pass; a part had already crossed the bridge, and was slowly toiling up the rugged road on the opposite side, when great shouts arose, and every cliff appeared suddenly peopled with furious foes. In an instant a deluge of missiles of every sort was rained upon the astonished Moslems. Darts, arrows, javelins, and stones, came whistling down, singling out the most conspicuous cavaliers; and at times great masses of rock, bounding and thundering along the mountain side, crushed whole ranks at once, or hurled horses and riders over the edge of the precipices.

It was in vain to attempt to brave this mountain warfare. The enemy were beyond the reach of missiles, and safe from pursuit; and the horses of the Arabs were here an incumbrance rather than an aid. The trumpets sounded a retreat, and the army retired in tumult and confusion, harassed by the enemy until extricated from the defile. Taric, who had beheld cities and castles surrendering without a blow, was enraged at being braved by a mere horde of mountain boors, and made another attempt to penetrate the mountains, but was again waylaid and opposed with horrible slaughter.

The fiery son of Ishmael foamed with rage at being thus checked in his career and foiled in his revenge. He was on the point of abandoning the attempt, and returning to the vega, when a Christian boor sought his camp, and was admitted to his presence. The miserable wretch possessed a cabin and a little patch of ground among the mountains, and offered, if these should be protected from ravage, to inform the Arab commander of a way by which troops of horse might be safely introduced into the bosom of the sierra, and the whole subdued. The name of this caitiff was Fandino, and it deserves to be perpetually recorded with ignominy. His case is an instance how much it is in the power, at times, of the most insignificant being to do mischief, and how all

the valour of the magnanimous and the brave may be defeated by the treason of the selfish and the despicable.

Instructed by this traitor, the Arab commander caused ten thousand foot soldiers and four thousand horsemen, commanded by a valiant captain named Ibrahim Albuxarra, to be conveyed by sea to the little port of Adra, at the Mediterranean foot of the mountains. Here they landed, and, guided by the traitor, penetrated to the heart of the sierra, laying everything waste. The brave mountaineers, thus hemmed in between two armies, destitute of fortresses and without hope of succour, were obliged to capitulate; but their valour was not without avail, for never, even in Spain, did vanquished people surrender on prouder or more honourable terms. We have named the wretch who betrayed his native mountains: let us equally record the name of him whose pious patriotism saved them from desolation. It was the reverend Bishop Centerio. While the warriors rested on their arms in grim and menacing tranquillity among the cliffs, this venerable prelate descended to the Arab tents in the valley, to conduct the capitulation. In stipulating for the safety of his people, he did not forget that they were brave men, and that they still had weapons in their hands. He obtained conditions accordingly. It was agreed that they should be permitted to retain their houses, lands, and personal effects; that they should be unmolested in their religion, and their temples and priests respected: and that they should pay no other tribute than such as they had been accustomed to render to their kings. Should they prefer to leave the country and remove to any part of Christendom, they were to be allowed to sell their possessions; and to take with them the money, and all their other effects.*

Ibrahim Albuxarra remained in command of the territory, and the whole sierra, or chain of mountains, took his name, which has since been slightly corrupted into that of the Alpuxarras. The subjugation of this rugged region, however, was for a long time incomplete; many of the Christians maintained a wild and hostile independence, living in green glens and scanty valleys among the heights; and the sierra of the Alpuxarras has, in all ages, been one of the most difficult parts of Andalusia to be subdued.

* Pedraza, Hist. Granada, p. iii. cap. 2. Bleda, Cronica, lib. ii. cap. 10.

CHAPTER III.

While the veteran Taric was making this wide circuit through the land, the expedition under Magued the renegado proceeded against the city of Cordova. The inhabitants of that ancient place had beheld the great army of Don Roderick spreading like an inundation over the plain of the Guadalquivir, and had felt confident that it must sweep the infidel invaders from the land. What then was their dismay, when scattered fugitives, wild with horror and affright, brought them tidings of the entire overthrow of that mighty host, and the disappearance of the king! In the midst of their consternation, the Gothic noble, Pelistes, arrived at their gates, haggard with fatigue of body and anguish of mind, and leading a remnant of his devoted cavaliers, who had survived the dreadful battle of the Guadalete. The people of Cordova knew the valiant and steadfast spirit of Pelistes, and rallied round him as a last hope. "Roderick is fallen," cried they, "and we have neither king nor captain: be unto us as a sovereign; take command of our city, and protect us in this hour of peril!"

The heart of Pelistes was free from ambition, and was too much broken by grief to be flattered by the offer of command; but he felt above everything for the woes of his country, and was ready to assume any desperate service in her cause. "Your city," said he, "is surrounded by walls and towers, and may yet check the progress of the foe. Promise to stand by me to the last, and I will undertake your defence." The inhabitants all promised implicit obedience and devoted zeal: for what will not the inhabitants of a wealthy city promise and profess in a moment of alarm? The instant, however, that they heard the approach of the Moslem troops, the wealthier citizens packed up their effects and fled to the mountains, or to the distant city of Toledo. Even the monks collected the riches of their convents and churches, and fled. Pelistes, though he saw himself thus deserted by those who had the greatest interest in the safety of the city, yet determined not to abandon its defence. He had still his faithful though scanty band of cavaliers, and a number of fugitives of the army; in all amounting to about four hundred men. He stationed guards, therefore, at the

gates and in the towers, and made every preparation for a desperate resistance.

In the meantime, the army of Moslems and apostate Christians advanced, under the command of the Greek renegado, Magued, and guided by the traitor Julian. While they were yet at some distance from the city, their scouts brought to them a shepherd, whom they had surprised on the banks of the Guadalquivir. The trembling hind was an inhabitant of Cordova, and revealed to them the state of the place, and the weakness of its garrison.

"And the walls and gates," said Magued, "are they strong and well guarded?"

"The walls are high, and of wondrous strength," replied the shepherd; "and soldiers hold watch at the gates by day and night. But there is one place where the city may be secretly entered. In a part of the wall, not far from the bridge, the battlements are broken, and there is a breach at some height from the ground. Hard by stands a fig tree, by the aid of which the wall may easily be scaled."

Having received this information, Magued halted with his army, and sent forward several renegado Christians, partisans of Count Julian, who entered Cordova as if flying before the enemy. On a dark and tempestuous night, the Moslems approached to the end of the bridge which crosses the Guadalquivir, and remained in ambush. Magued took a small party of chosen men, and guided by the shepherd, forded the stream, and groped silently along the wall to the place where stood the fig-tree. The traitors, who had fraudulently entered the city, were ready on the wall to render assistance. Magued ordered his followers to to make use of the long folds of their turbans instead of cords, and succeeded without difficulty in clambering into the breach.

Drawing their scimitars, they now hastened to the gate which opened towards the bridge; the guards, suspecting no assault from within, were taken by surprise, and easily overpowered; the gate was thrown open, and the army that had remained in ambush rushed over the bridge, and entered without opposition.

The alarm had by this time spread throughout the city; but already a torrent of armed men was pouring through the streets. Pelistes sallied forth with his cavaliers and such of the soldiery as he could collect, and endeavoured to repel the

foe; but every effort was in vain. The Christians were slowly driven from street to street, and square to square, disputing every inch of ground; until, finding another body of the enemy approaching to attack them in rear, they took refuge in a convent, and succeeded in throwing to and barring the ponderous doors. The Moors attempted to force the gates, but were assailed with such showers of missiles from the windows and battlements that they were obliged to retire. Pelistes examined the convent, and found it admirably calculated for defence. It was of great extent, with spacious courts and cloisters. The gates were massive, and secured with bolts and bars; the walls were of great thickness; the windows high and grated; there was a great tank or cistern of water, and the friars, who had fled from the city, had left behind a good supply of provisions. Here, then, Pelistes proposed to make a stand, and to endeavour to hold out until succour should arrive from some other city. His proposition was received with shouts by his loyal cavaliers; not one of whom but was ready to lay down his life in the service of his commander.

CHAPTER IV.

For three long and anxious months did the good knight Pelistes and his cavaliers defend their sacred asylum against the repeated assaults of the infidels. The standard of the true faith was constantly displayed from the loftiest tower, and a fire blazed there throughout the night, as signals of distress to the surrounding country. The watchman from his turret kept a wary look out over the land, hoping in every cloud of dust to descry the glittering helms of Christian warriors. The country, however, was forlorn and abandoned, or if perchance a human being was perceived, it was some Arab horseman, careering the plain of the Guadalquivir as fearlessly as if it were his native desert.

By degrees the provisions of the convent were consumed, and the cavaliers had to slay their horses, one by one, for food. They suffered the wasting miseries of famine without a murmur, and always met their commander with a smile. Pelistes, however, read their sufferings in their wan and emaciated countenances, and felt more for them than for himself. He was grieved at heart that such loyalty and valour

should only lead to slavery or death, and resolved to make one desperate attempt for their deliverance. Assembling them one day in the court of the convent, he disclosed to them his purpose.

"Comrades and brothers in arms," said he, "it is needless to conceal danger from brave men. Our case is desperate; our countrymen either know not or heed not our situation, or have not the means to help us. There is but one chance of escape; it is full of peril, and, as your leader, I claim the right to brave it. To-morrow at break of day I will sally forth and make for the city gates at the moment of their being opened; no one will suspect a solitary horseman; I shall be taken for one of those recreant Christians who have basely mingled with the enemy. If I succeed in getting out of the city, I will hasten to Toledo for assistance. In all events I shall be back in less than twenty days. Keep a vigilant look-out towards the nearest mountain. If you behold five lights blazing upon its summit, be assured I am at hand with succour, and prepare yourselves to sally forth upon the city as I attack the gates. Should I fail in obtaining aid, I will return to die with you."

When he had finished, his warriors would fain have severally undertaken the enterprise, and they remonstrated against his exposing himself to such peril; but he was not to be shaken from his purpose. On the following morning, ere the break of day, his horse was led forth, caparisoned, into the court of the convent, and Pelistes appeared in complete armour. Assembling his cavaliers in the chapel, he prayed with them for some time before the altar of the holy Virgin. Then rising, and standing in the midst of them, "God knows, my companions," said he, "whether we have any longer a country; if not, better were we in our graves. Loyal and true have ye been to me, and loyal have ye been to my son, even to the hour of his death; and grieved am I that I have no other means of proving my love for you, than by adventuring my worthless life for your deliverance. All I ask of you before I go, is a solemn promise to defend yourselves to the last like brave men and Christian cavaliers, and never to renounce your faith, or throw yourselves on the mercy of the renegado Magued, or the traitor Julian." They all pledged their words, and took a solemn oath to the same effect before the altar.

Pelistes then embraced them one by one, and gave them his benediction, and as he did so his heart yearned over them, for he felt towards them, not merely as a companion in arms and as a commander; but as a father; and he took leave of them as if he had been going to his death. The warriors, on their part, crowded round him in silence, kissing his hands and the hem of his surcoat, and many of the sternest shed tears.

The grey of the dawning had just streaked the east, when Pelistes took lance in hand, hung his shield about his neck, and mounting his steed, issued quietly forth from a postern of the convent. He paced slowly through the vacant streets, and the tramp of his steed echoed afar in that silent hour; but no one suspected a warrior, moving thus singly and tranquilly in an armed city, to be an enemy. He arrived at the gate just at the hour of opening; a foraging party was entering with cattle and with beasts of burden, and he passed unheeded through the throng. As soon as he was out of sight of the soldiers who guarded the gate, he quickened his pace, and at length, galloping at full speed, succeeded in gaining the mountains. Here he paused, and alighted at a solitary farm-house to breathe his panting steed; but had scarce put foot to ground when he heard the distant sound of pursuit, and beheld a horseman spurring up the mountain.

Throwing himself again upon his steed, he abandoned the road, and galloped across the rugged heights. The deep dry channel of a torrent checked his career, and his horse, stumbling upon the margin, rolled with his rider to the bottom. Pelistes was sorely bruised by the fall, and his whole visage was bathed in blood; his horse, too, was maimed and unable to stand, so that there was no hope of escape. The enemy drew near, and proved to be no other than Magued, the renegado general, who had perceived him as he issued forth from the city, and had followed singly in pursuit. "Well met, señor alcayde!" exclaimed he, "and overtaken in good time. Surrender yourself my prisoner."

Pelistes made no other reply than by drawing his sword, bracing his shield, and preparing for defence. Magued, though an apostate, and a fierce warrior, possessed some sparks of knightly magnanimity. Seeing his adversary dismounted, he disdained to take him at a disadvantage, but alighting, tied his horse to a tree.

The conflict that ensued was desperate and doubtful, for seldom had two warriors met so well matched or of equal prowess. Their shields were hacked to pieces, the ground was strewed with fragments of their armour, and stained with their blood; they paused repeatedly to take breath, regarding each other with wonder and admiration. Pelistes, however, had been previously injured by his fall, and fought to great disadvantage; the renegado perceived it, and sought not to slay him, but to take him alive. Shifting his ground continually, he wearied his antagonist, who was growing weaker and weaker from the loss of blood. At length Pelistes seemed to summon up all his remaining strength to make a signal blow; it was skilfully parried, and he fell prostrate upon the ground. The renegado ran up, and putting his foot upon his sword, and the point of his scimitar to his throat, called upon him to ask his life, but Pelistes lay without sense, and as one dead. Magued then unlaced the helmet of his vanquished enemy, and seated himself on a rock beside him to recover breath; in this situation the warriors were found by certain Moorish cavaliers, who marvelled much at the traces of that stern and bloody combat.

Finding there was yet life in the Christian knight, they laid him upon one of their horses, and aiding Magued to remount his steed, proceeded slowly to the city. As the convoy passed by the convent, the cavaliers looked forth and beheld their commander borne along bleeding and a captive. Furious at the sight they sallied forth to the rescue, but were repulsed by a superior force and driven back to the great portal of the church. The enemy entered pell-mell with them, fighting from aisle to aisle, from altar to altar, and in the courts and cloisters of the convent. The greater part of the cavaliers died bravely, sword in hand, the rest were disabled with wounds and made prisoners. The convent, which was lately their castle, was now made their prison, and in after-times, in commemoration of this event, was consecrated by the name of St. George of the Captives.

CHAPTER V.

THE loyalty and prowess of the good knight Pelistes had gained him the reverence even of his enemies. He was for a long time disabled by his wounds, during which he was kindly

treated by the Arab chieftains, who strove by every courteous means to cheer his sadness and make him forget that he was a captive. When he was recovered from his wounds, they gave him a magnificent banquet, to testify their admiration of his virtues.

Pelistes appeared at the banquet clad in sable armour, and with a countenance pale and dejected; for the ills of his country evermore preyed upon his heart. Among the assembled guests was Count Julian, who held a high command in the Moslem army, and was arrayed in garments of mingled Christian and Morisco fashion. Pelistes had been a close and bosom friend of Julian in former times, and had served with him in the wars in Africa; but when the count advanced to accost him with his wonted amity, he turned away in silence, and deigned not to notice him; neither, during the whole of the repast, did he address to him ever a word, but treated him as one unknown.

When the banquet was nearly at a close, the discourse turned upon the events of the war, and the Moslem chieftains, in great courtesy, dwelt upon the merits of many of the Christian cavaliers who had fallen in battle, and all extolled the valour of those who had recently perished in the defence of the convent. Pelistes remained silent for a time, and checked the grief which swelled within his bosom as he thought of his devoted cavaliers; at length, lifting up his voice, "Happy are the dead," said he, "for they rest in peace, and are gone to receive the reward of their piety and valour! I could mourn over the loss of my companions in arms, but they have fallen with honour, and are spared the wretchedness I feel in witnessing the thraldom of my country. I have seen my only son, the pride and hope of my age, cut down at my side; I have beheld kindred friends and followers falling one by one around me, and have become so seasoned to those losses that I have ceased to weep. Yet there is one man over whose loss I will never cease to grieve. He was the loved companion of my youth, and the steadfast associate of my graver years. He was one of the most loyal of Christian knights. As a friend he was loving and sincere; as a warrior his achievements were above all praise. What has become of him, alas! I know not. If fallen in battle, and I knew where his bones were laid, whether bleaching on the plains of Xeres, or buried in the waters of the Guadalete, I would seek them out and en-

shrine them as the relics of a sainted patriot. Or if, like many of his companions in arms, he should be driven to wander in foreign lands, I would join him in his hapless exile, and we would mourn together over the desolation of our country!"

Even the hearts of the Arab warriors were touched by the lament of the good Pelistes, and they said, "Who was this peerless friend, in whose praise thou art so fervent?"

"His name," replied Pelistes, "was Count Julian."

The Moslem warriors stared with surprise. "Noble cavalier," exclaimed they, "has grief disordered thy senses? Behold thy friend living and standing before thee, and yet thou dost not know him! This, this is Count Julian!"

Upon this Pelistes turned his eyes upon the count, and regarded him for a time with a lofty and stern demeanour, and the countenance of Julian darkened, and was troubled, and his eye sank beneath the regard of that loyal and honourable cavalier. And Pelistes said, "In the name of God, I charge thee, man unknown! to answer. Dost thou presume to call thyself Count Julian?"

The count reddened with anger at these words. "Pelistes," said he, "what means this mockery? Thou knowest me well; thou knowest me for Count Julian?"

"I know thee for a base impostor!" cried Pelistes. "Count Julian was a noble Gothic knight, but thou appearest in mongrel Moorish garb. Count Julian was a Christian, faithful and devout; but I behold in thee a renegado and an infidel. Count Julian was ever loyal to his king, and foremost in his country's cause: were he living, he would be the first to put shield on neck and lance in rest, to clear the land of her invaders:—but thou art a hoary traitor! thy hands are stained with the royal blood of the Goths, and thou hast betrayed thy country and thy God. Therefore, I again repeat, man unknown! if thou sayest thou art Count Julian, thou liest! My friend, alas! is dead; and thou art some fiend from hell, which has taken possession of his body to dishonour his memory and render him an abhorrence among men." So saying, Pelistes turned his back upon the traitor and went forth from the banquet, leaving Count Julian overwhelmed with confusion, and an object of scorn to all the Moslem cavaliers.

CHAPTER VI.

WHILE these events were passing in Cordova, the one-eyed Arab general, Taric el Tuerto, having subdued the city and vega of Granada, and the Mountains of the Sun and Air, directed his march into the interior of the kingdom to attack the ancient city of Toledo, the capital of the Gothic kings. So great was the terror caused by the rapid conquests of the invaders, that, at the very rumour of their approach, many of the inhabitants, though thus in the very citadel of the kingdom, abandoned it and fled to the mountains with their families. Enough remained, however, to have made a formidable defence; and, as the city was seated on a lofty rock, surrounded by massive walls and towers, and almost girdled by the Tagus, it threatened a long resistance. The Arab warriors pitched their tents in the vega, on the borders of the river, and prepared for a tedious siege.

One evening, as Taric was seated in his tent, meditating on the mode in which he should assail this rock-built city, certain of the patroles of the camp brought a stranger before him. "As we were going our rounds," said they, "we beheld this man lowered down with cords from a tower, and he delivered himself into our hands, praying to be conducted to thy presence, that he might reveal to thee certain things important for thee to know."

Taric fixed his eyes upon the stranger: he was a Jewish rabbi, with a long beard which spread upon his gabardine, and descended even to his girdle. "What hast thou to reveal?" said he to the Israelite. "What I have to reveal," replied the other, "is for thee alone to hear: command then, I entreat thee, that these men withdraw." When they were alone, he addressed Taric in Arabic: "Know, O leader of the host of Islam," said he, "that I am sent to thee on the part of the children of Israel resident in Toledo. We have been oppressed and insulted by the Christians in the time of their prosperity, and now that they are threatened with siege, they have taken from us all our provisions and our money; they have compelled us to work like slaves, repairing their walls; and they oblige us to bear arms and guard a part of the towers. We abhor their yoke, and are ready, if thou wilt receive us as subjects, and permit us the free enjoyment of our religion and our property, to deliver the towers we

guard into thy hands, and to give thee safe entrance into the city."

The Arab chief was overjoyed at this proposition, and he rendered much honour to the rabbi; and gave orders to clothe him in a costly robe, and to perfume his beard with essences of a pleasant odour, so that he was the most sweet smelling of his tribe; and he said, "Make thy words good, and put me in possession of the city, and I will do all and more than thou hast required, and will bestow countless wealth upon thee and thy brethren."

Then a plan was devised between them by which the city was to be betrayed and given up. "But how shall I be secured," said he, "that all thy tribe will fulfil what thou hast engaged, and that this is not a stratagem to get me and my people into your power?"

"This shall be thy assurance," replied the rabbi: "ten of the principal Israelites will come to this tent and remain as hostages."

"It is enough," said Taric; and he made oath to accomplish all that he had promised; and the Jewish hostages came and delivered themselves into his hands.

On a dark night, a chosen band of Moslem warriors approached the part of the walls guarded by the Jews, and were secretly admitted into a postern gate and concealed within a tower. Three thousand Arabs were at the same time placed in ambush among rocks and thickets, in a place on the opposite side of the river, commanding a view of the city. On the following morning Taric ravaged the gardens of the valley, and set fire to the farm-houses, and then breaking up his camp, marched off as if abandoning the siege.

The people of Toledo gazed with astonishment from their walls at the retiring squadrons of the enemy, and scarcely could credit their unexpected deliverance; before night, there was not a turban nor a hostile lance to be seen in the vega. They attributed it all to the special intervention of their patron saint, Leocadia; and the following day being Palm Sunday, they sallied forth in procession, man, woman, and child, to the church of that blessed saint, which is situated without the walls, that they might return thanks for her marvellous protection.

When all Toledo had thus poured itself forth, and was marching with cross and relic and solemn chaunt towards the

chapel, the Arabs, who had been concealed in the tower, rushed forth and barred the gates of the city. While some guarded the gates, others dispersed themselves about the streets, slaying all who made resistance; and others kindled a fire and made a column of smoke on the top of the citadel. At sight of this signal the Arabs, in ambush beyond the river, rose with a great shout, and attacked the multitude who were thronging to the church of St. Leocadia. There was a great massacre, although the people were without arms, and made no resistance; and it is said, in ancient chronicles, that it was the apostate Bishop Oppas who guided the Moslems to their prey, and incited them to this slaughter. "The pious reader," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "will be slow to believe such turpitude; but there is nothing more venomous than the rancour of an apostate priest; for the best things in this world, when corrupted, become the worst and most baneful."

Many of the Christians had taken refuge within the church, and had barred the doors; but Oppas commanded that fire should be set to the portals, threatening to put every one within to the sword. Happily the veteran Taric arrived just in time to stay the fury of this reverend renegado. He ordered the trumpets to call off the troops from the carnage, and extended grace to all the surviving inhabitants. They were permitted to remain in quiet possession of their homes and effects, paying only a moderate tribute; and they were allowed to exercise the rites of their religion in the existing churches, to the number of seven, but were prohibited from erecting any others. Those who preferred to leave the city were suffered to depart in safety, but not to take with them any of their wealth.

Immense spoil was found by Taric in the alcazar, or royal castle, situated on a rocky eminence, in the highest part of the city. Among the regalia treasured up in a secret chamber, were twenty-five regal crowns of fine gold, garnished with jacynths, amethysts, diamonds, and other precious stones. These were the crowns of the different Gothic kings who had reigned in Spain; it having been the usage, on the death of each king, to deposit his crown in this treasury, inscribing on it his name and age.*

When Taric was thus in possession of the city, the Jews came to him in procession with songs and dances, and the

* Conde, Hist. de las Arabes en España, cap. 12.

sound of timbrel and psaltery, hailing him as their lord, and reminding him of his promises.

The son of Ishmael kept his word with the children of Israel: they were protected in the possession of all their wealth, and the exercise of their religion; and were, moreover, rewarded with jewels of gold, and jewels of silver, and much monies.*

A subsequent expedition was led by Taric against Guadalaxara, which surrendered without resistance: he moreover captured the city of Medina Celi, where he found an inestimable table which had formed a part of the spoil taken at Rome by Alaric, at the time that the sacred city was conquered by the Goths. It was composed of one single and entire emerald, and possessed talismanic powers; for tradition affirms that it was the work of genii, and had been wrought by them for King Solomon the Wise, the son of David. This marvellous relic was carefully preserved by Taric, as the most precious of all his spoils, being intended by him as a present to the caliph; and in commemoration of it, the city was called by the Arabs, Medina Almeyda; that is to say, "The City of the Table."†

Having made these and other conquests of less importance, and having collected great quantities of gold and silver, and rich stuffs and precious stones, Taric returned with his booty to the royal city of Toledo.

CHAPTER VII.

Let us leave for a season the bold Taric in his triumphant progress from city to city, while we turn our eyes to Muza ben Nozier, the renowned emir of Almagreb, and the commander-in-chief of the Moslem forces of the west. When that jealous chieftain had despatched his letter commanding Taric

* The stratagem of the Jews of Toledo is recorded briefly by Bishop Lucas de Tuy, in his chronicle, but is related at large in the chronicle of the Moor Rasis.

† According to Arabian legends, this table was a mirror revealing all great events; insomuch that by looking on it the possessor might behold battles, and sieges, and feats of chivalry, and all actions worthy of renown; and might thus ascertain the truth of all historic transactions. It was a mirror of history, therefore, and had very probably aided King Solomon in acquiring that prodigious knowledge and wisdom for which he was renowned.

to pause and await his coming, he immediately made every preparation to enter Spain with a powerful reinforcement, and to take command of the conquering army. He left his eldest son, Abdalasis, in Caervan, with authority over Almagreb, or Western Africa. This Abdalasis was in the flower of his youth, and beloved by the soldiery for the magnanimity and the engaging affability which graced his courage.

Muza ben Nozier crossed the strait of Hercules with a chosen force of ten thousand horse and eight thousand foot, Arabs and Africans. He was accompanied by his two sons, Meruan and Abdelola, and by numerous illustrious Arabian cavaliers of the tribe of Koreish. He landed his shining legions on the coast of Andalusia, and pitched his tents near to the Guadiana. There first he received intelligence of the disobedience of Taric to his orders, and that, without waiting his arrival, the impetuous chieftain had continued his career, and with his light Arab squadrons had overrun and subdued the noblest provinces and cities of the kingdom.

The jealous spirit of Muza was still more exasperated by these tidings: he looked upon Taric no longer as a friend and coadjutor, but as an invidious rival, the decided enemy of his glory; and he determined on his ruin. His first consideration, however, was to secure to himself a share in the actual conquest of the land, before it should be entirely subjugated.

Taking guides, therefore, from among his Christian captives, he set out to subdue such parts of the country as had not been visited by Taric. The first place which he assailed was the ancient city of Carmona: it was not of great magnitude, but was fortified with high walls and massive towers, and many of the fugitives of the late army had thrown themselves into it.

The Goths had by this time recovered from their first panic; they had become accustomed to the sight of Moslem troops, and their native courage had been roused by danger. Shortly after the Arabs had encamped before their walls, a band of cavaliers made a sudden sally one morning before the break of day, fell upon the enemy by surprise, killed above three hundred of them in their tents, and effected their retreat into the city; leaving twenty of their number dead, covered with honourable wounds, and in the very centre of the camp.

On the following day they made another sally, and fell on a

different quarter of the encampment; but the Arabs were on their guard, and met them with superior numbers. After fighting fiercely for a time, they were routed, and fled full speed for the city, with the Arabs hard upon their traces. The guards within feared to open the gate, lest with their friends they should admit a torrent of enemies. Seeing themselves thus shut out, the fugitives determined to die like brave soldiers rather than surrender. Wheeling suddenly round, they opened a path through the host of their pursuers, fought their way back to the camp, and raged about it with desperate fury until they were all slain, after having killed above eight hundred of the enemy.*

Muza now ordered that the place should be taken by storm. The Moslems assailed it on all sides, but were vigorously resisted; many were slain by showers of stones, arrows, and boiling pitch, and many who had mounted with scaling ladders were thrown headlong from the battlements. The alcayde, Galo, aided solely by two men, defended a tower and a portion of the wall; killing and wounding with a cross-bow more than eighty of the enemy. The attack lasted above half a day, when the Moslems were repulsed with the loss of fifteen hundred men.

Muza was astonished and exasperated at meeting with such formidable resistance from so small a city; for it was one of the few places, during that memorable conquest, where the Gothic valour shone forth with its proper lustre. While the Moslem army lay encamped before the place, it was joined by Magued the renegado and Count Julian the traitor, with one thousand horsemen; most of them recreant Christians, base betrayers of their country, and more savage in their warfare than the Arabs of the desert. To find favour in the eyes of Muza, and to evince his devotion to the cause, the count undertook, by wily stratagem, to put this gallant city in his power.

One evening, just at twilight, a number of Christians, habited as travelling merchants, arrived at one of the gates, conducting a train of mules laden with arms and warlike munitions. "Open the gate quickly," cried they; "we bring supplies for the garrison, but the Arabs have discovered, and are in pursuit of us." The gate was thrown open; the merchants entered with their beasts of burden, and were joyfully

* Abulcasim. Perdita de España, lib. i. c. 13.

received. Meat and drink were placed before them; and after they had refreshed themselves, they retired to the quarters allotted to them.

These pretended merchants were Count Julian and a number of his partisans. At the hour of midnight they stole forth silently, and assembling together, proceeded to what was called the gate of Cordova. Here setting suddenly upon the unsuspecting guards, they put them to the edge of the sword, and, throwing open the gates, admitted a great body of the Arabs. The inhabitants were roused from their sleep by sound of drum and trumpet, and the clattering of horses. The Arabs scoured the streets; a horrible massacre was commenced, in which none were spared but such of the females as were young and beautiful, and fitted to grace the harems of the conquerors. The arrival of Muza put an end to the pillage and the slaughter, and he granted favourable terms to the survivors. Thus the valiant little city of Carmona, after nobly resisting the open assaults of the infidels, fell a victim to the treachery of apostate Christians.*

CHAPTER VIII.

After the capture of Carmona, Muza descended into a noble plain, covered with fields of grain, with orchards and gardens, through which glided the soft-flowing Guadalquivir. On the borders of the river stood the ancient city of Seville, surrounded by Roman walls, and defended by its golden tower. Understanding from his spies that the city had lost the flower of its youth in the battle of the Guadalete, Muza anticipated but a faint resistance. A considerable force, however, still remained within the place, and what they wanted in numbers they made up in resolution. For some days they withstood the assaults of the enemy, and defended their walls with great courage. Their want of warlike munitions, however, and the superior force and skill of the besieging army, left them no hope of being able to hold out long. There were two youthful cavaliers of uncommon valour in the city. They assembled the warriors and addressed them. "We cannot save the city," said they, "but at least we may save ourselves, and preserve so many strong arms for the service of our country. Let us cut our way through the infidel force and gain some

* Cron. Gen. de España, por Alonzo el Sabio, p. iii. cap. 1.

secure fortress, from whence we may return with augmented numbers for the rescue of the city."

The advice of the young cavaliers was adopted. In the dead of the night the garrison assembled, to the number of about three thousand; the most part mounted on horseback. Suddenly sallying from one of the gates, they rushed in a compact body upon the camp of the Saracens, which was negligently guarded; for the Moslems expected no such act of desperation. The camp was a scene of great carnage and confusion; many were slain on both sides; the two valiant leaders of the Christians fell covered with wounds, but the main body succeeded in forcing their way through the centre of the army, and in making their retreat to Beja in Lusitania.

Muza was at a loss to know the meaning of this desperate sally. In the morning he perceived the gates of the city wide open. A number of ancient and venerable men presented themselves at his tent, offering submission and imploring mercy; for none were left in the place but the old, the infirm, and the miserable. Muza listened to them with compassion, and granted their prayer; and the only tribute he exacted was three measures of wheat and three of barley from each house or family. He placed a garrison of Arabs in the city, and left there a number of Jews to form a body of population. Having thus secured two important places in Andalusia, he passed the boundaries of the province, and advanced with great martial pomp into Lusitania.

CHAPTER IX.

The army of Muza was now augmented to about eighteen thousand horsemen; but he took with him but few foot soldiers, leaving them to garrison the conquered towns. He met with no resistance on his entrance into Lusitania. City after city laid its keys at his feet, and implored to be received in peaceful vassalage. One city alone prepared for vigorous defence, the ancient Merida, a place of great extent, uncounted riches, and prodigious strength. A noble Goth named Sacarus was the governor; a man of consummate wisdom, patriotism, and valour. Hearing of the approach of the invaders, he gathered within the walls all the people of the surrounding country, with their horses and mules, their flocks and herds, and most precious effects. To insure for a

long time a supply of bread, he filled the magazines with grain, and erected windmills on the churches. This done, he laid waste the surrounding country to a great extent, so that a besieging army would have to encamp in a desert.

When Muza came in sight of this magnificent city, he was struck with admiration. He remained for some time gazing in silence upon its mighty walls and lordly towers, its vast extent, and the stately palaces and temples with which it was adorned. "Surely," cried he, at length, "all the people of the earth have combined their power and skill to embellish and aggrandise this city. Allah Achbar! Happy will he be who shall have the glory of making such a conquest!"

Seeing that a place so populous and so strongly fortified would be likely to maintain a long and formidable resistance, he sent messengers to Africa to his son Abdalasis, to collect all the forces that could be spared from the garrisons of Mauritania, and to hasten and reinforce him.

While Muza was forming his encampments, deserters from the city brought him word that a chosen band intended to sally forth at midnight and surprise his camp. The Arab commander immediately took measures to receive them with a counter surprise. Having formed his plan, and communicated it to his principal officers, he ordered that, throughout the day, there should be kept up an appearance of negligent confusion in his encampment. The outposts were feebly guarded; fires were lighted in various places, as if preparing for feasting; bursts of music and shouts of revelry resounded from different quarters, and the whole camp seemed to be rioting in careless security on the plunder of the land. As the night advanced, the fires were gradually extinguished, and silence ensued, as if the soldiery had sunk into deep sleep after the carousal.

In the meantime, bodies of troops had been secretly and silently marched to reinforce the out-posts; and the renegado Magued, with a numerous force, had formed an ambuscade in a deep stone quarry, by which the Christians would have to pass. These preparations being made, they awaited the approach of the enemy in breathless silence.

About midnight, the chosen force intended for the sally assembled, and the command was confided to Count Tendero, a Gothic cavalier of tried prowess. After having heard a solemn mass, and received the benediction of the priest, they

marched out of the gate with all possible silence. They were suffered to pass the ambuscade in the quarry without molestation: as they approached the Moslem camp, everything appeared quiet; for the foot soldiers were concealed in slopes and hollows, and every Arab horseman lay in his armour beside his steed. The sentinels on the out-posts waited until the Christians were close at hand, and then fled in apparent consternation.

Count Tendero gave the signal for assault, and the Christians rushed confidently forward. In an instant an uproar of drums, trumpets, and shrill war-cries burst forth from every side. An army seemed to spring up from the earth; squadrons of horse came thundering on them in front, while the quarry poured forth legions of armed warriors in their rear.

The noise of the terrific conflict that took place, was heard on the city walls, and answered by shouts of exultation; for the Christians thought it rose from the terror and confusion of the Arab camp. In a little while, however, they were undeceived by fugitives from the fight, aghast with terror, and covered with wounds. "Hell itself," cried they, "is on the side of these infidels; the earth casts forth warriors and steeds to aid them. We have fought, not with men, but devils!"

The greater part of the chosen troops who had sallied, were cut to pieces in that scene of massacre, for they had been confounded by the tempest of battle which suddenly broke forth around them. Count Tendero fought with desperate valour, and fell covered with wounds. His body was found the next morning, lying among the slain, and transpierced with half a score of lances. The renegado Magued cut off his head and tied it to the tail of his horse, and repaired with this savage trophy to the tent of Muza; but the hostility of the Arab general was of a less malignant kind. He ordered that the head and body should be placed together upon a bier, and treated with becoming reverence.

In the course of the day, a train of priests and friars came forth from the city to request permission to seek for the body of the count. Musa delivered it to them, with many soldier-like encomiums on the valour of that good cavalier. The priests covered it with a pall of cloth of gold, and bore it back in melancholy procession to the city, where it was received with loud lamentations.

The siege was now pressed with great vigour, and repeated assaults were made, but in vain. Muza saw at length that the walls were too high to be scaled, and the gates too strong to be burst open without the aid of engines; and he desisted from the attack until machines for the purpose could be constructed. The governor suspected from this cessation of active warfare, that the enemy flattered themselves to reduce the place by famine; he caused, therefore, large baskets of bread to be thrown from the wall, and sent a messenger to Muza to inform him that if his army should be in want of bread, he would supply it, having sufficient corn in his granaries for a ten years' siege.*

The citizens, however, did not possess the undaunted spirit of their governor. When they found that the Moslems were constructing tremendous engines for the destruction of their walls, they lost all courage, and, surrounding the governor in a clamorous multitude, compelled him to send forth persons to capitulate.

The ambassadors came into the presence of Muza with awe; for they expected to find a fierce and formidable warrior in one who had filled the land with terror: but, to their astonishment, they beheld an ancient and venerable man, with white hair, a snowy beard, and a pale, emaciated countenance. He had passed the previous night without sleep, and had been all day in the field: he was exhausted, therefore, by watchfulness and fatigue; and his garments were covered with dust.

"What a devil of a man is this," murmured the ambassadors one to another, "to undertake such a siege when on the verge of the grave! Let us defend our city the best way we can; surely we can hold out longer than the life of this greybeard."

They returned to the city, therefore, scoffing at an invader who seemed fitter to lean on a crutch than wield a lance; and the terms offered by Muza, which would otherwise have been thought favourable, were scornfully rejected by the inhabitants. A few days put an end to this mistaken confidence. Abdalasis, the son of Muza, arrived from Africa, at the head of his reinforcement: he brought seven thousand horsemen, and a host of Barbary archers; and made a glorious display as he marched into the camp. The arrival of this youthful warrior was hailed with great acclamations; so much had he

* Bleda, Cronica, lib. ii. cap. 11.

won the hearts of the soldiery by the frankness, and suavity, and generosity of his conduct. Immediately after his arrival, a grand assault was made upon the city; and several of the huge battering engines being finished, they were wheeled up, and began to thunder against the walls.

The unsteady populace were again seized with terror; and, surrounding their governor with fresh clamours, obliged him to send forth ambassadors a second time to treat of a surrender. When admitted to the presence of Muza, the ambassadors could scarcely believe their eyes; or that this was the same withered, white-headed old man, of whom they had lately spoken with scoffing. His hair and beard were tinged of a ruddy brown; his countenance was refreshed by repose, and flushed with indignation; and he appeared a man in the matured vigour of his days. The ambassadors were struck with awe. "Surely," whispered they, one to the other, "this must be either a devil or a magician, who can thus make himself old and young at pleasure!"

Muza received them haughtily. "Hence!" said he, "and tell your people I grant them the same terms I have already proffered, provided the city be instantly surrendered; but, by the head of Mahomet, if there be any further delay, not one mother's son of ye shall receive mercy at my hands!"

The deputies returned into the city pale and dismayed. "Go forth! go forth!" cried they, "and accept whatever terms are offered: of what avail is it to fight against men who can renew their youth at pleasure? Behold, we left the leader of the infidels an old and feeble man, and to-day we find him youthful and vigorous!"*

The place was, therefore, surrendered forthwith, and Muza entered it in triumph. His terms were merciful. Those who chose to remain were protected in persons, possessions, and religion; he took the property of those only who abandoned the city, or had fallen in battle; together with all arms, and horses, and the treasures and ornaments of the churches. Among these sacred spoils was found a cup, made of a single pearl, which a king of Spain, in ancient times, had brought from the temple of Jerusalem when it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. This prize was presented by

* Conde, p. i. cap. 13. Ambrosio de Morales.—N.B. In the Chronicle of Spain, composed by order of Alonzo the Wise, this anecdote is given as having happened at the siege of Seville.

Muza to the caliph, and placed in the principal mosque of the city of Damascus.*

Muza knew how to esteem merit even in an enemy. When Sacarus, the governor of Merida, appeared before him, he lauded him greatly for the skill and courage he had displayed in the defence of his city; and, taking off his own scimitar, which was of great value, girded it upon him with his own hands. "Wear this," said he, "as a poor memorial of my admiration; a soldier of such virtue and valour is worthy of far higher honours."

He would have engaged the governor in his service, or have persuaded him to remain in the city, as an illustrious vassal of the caliph; but the noble-minded Sacarus refused to bend to the yoke of the conquerors; nor could he bring himself to reside contentedly in his country, when subjected to the domination of the infidels. Gathering together all those who chose to accompany him into exile, he embarked, to seek some country where he might live in peace, and in the free exercise of his religion. What shore these ocean-pilgrims landed upon has never been revealed; but tradition vaguely gives us to believe that it was some unknown island, far in the bosom of the Atlantic.†

CHAPTER X.

After the capture of Merida, Muza gave a grand banquet to his captains and distinguished warriors in that magnificent city. At this martial feast were many Arab cavaliers who had been present in various battles; and they vied with each other in recounting the daring enterprises in which they had been engaged, and the splendid triumphs they had witnessed. While they talked with ardour and exultation, Abdalasis, the son of Muza, alone kept silence, and sat with a dejected countenance. At length when there was a pause, he turned to his father, and addressed him with modest earnestness. "My lord and father," said he, "I blush to hear your warriors recount the toils and dangers they have passed, while I have done nothing to entitle me to their companionship. When I return to Egypt, and present myself before the caliph, he will ask me of my services in Spain; what battle I have gained;

* Marmol. Descrip. de Africa, t. i. lib. 2.

† Abulcasim, Perdida de España, lib. i. cap. 13.

what town or castle I have taken. How shall I answer him? If you love me, then, as your son, give me a command; intrust to me an enterprise; and let me acquire a name worthy to be mentioned among men."

The eyes of Muza kindled with joy at finding Abdalasis thus ambitious of renown in arms. "Allah be praised!" exclaimed he; "the heart of my son is in the right place. It is becoming in youth to look upward, and be aspiring. Thy desire, Abdalasis, shall be gratified."

An opportunity at that very time presented itself, to prove the prowess and discretion of the youth. During the siege of Merida, the Christian troops which had taken refuge at Beja had reinforced themselves from Penaflor, and, suddenly returning, had presented themselves before the gates of the city of Seville.* Certain of the Christian inhabitants threw open the gates and admitted them. The troops rushed to the alcazar, took it by surprise, and put many of the Moslem garrison to the sword: the residue made their escape, and fled to the Arab camp before Merida, leaving Seville in the hands of the Christians.

The veteran Muza, now that the siege of Merida was at an end, was meditating the recapture and punishment of Seville at the very time when Abdalasis addressed him. "Behold, my son," exclaimed he, "an enterprise worthy of thy ambition! Take with thee all the troops thou hast brought from Africa; reduce the city of Seville again to subjection, and plant thy standard upon its alcazar. But stop not there: carry thy conquering sword into the southern parts of Spain: thou wilt find there a harvest of glory yet to be reaped."

Abdalasis lost no time in departing upon this enterprise. He took with him Count Julian, Magued el Rumi, and the Bishop Oppas, that he might benefit by their knowledge of the country. When he came in sight of the fair city of Seville, seated like a queen in the midst of its golden plain, with the Guadalquivir flowing beneath its walls, he gazed upon it with the admiration of a lover, and lamented in his soul that he had to visit it as an avenger. His troops, however, regarded it with wrathful eyes, thinking only of its rebellion and of the massacre of their countrymen in the alcazar.

The principal people of the city had taken no part in this

* Espinosa. Antiq. y Grand. de Seville, lib. ii. cap. 3.

gallant but fruitless insurrection; and now, when they beheld the army of Abdalasis encamped upon the banks of the Guadalquivir, would fain have gone forth to make explanations, and intercede for mercy. The populace, however, forbade any one to leave the city, and, barring the gates, prepared to defend themselves to the last.

The place was attacked with resistless fury. The gates were soon burst open; the Moslems rushed in, panting for revenge. They confined not their slaughter to the soldiery in the alchzar, but roamed through every street, confounding the innocent with the guilty in one bloody massacre, and it was with the utmost difficulty that Abdalasis could at length succeed in staying their sanguinary career.*

The son of Muza proved himself as mild in conquest as he had been intrepid in assault. The moderation and benignity of his conduct soothed the terrors of the vanquished, and his wise precautions restored tranquillity. Having made proper regulations for the protection of the inhabitants, he left a strong garrison in the place to prevent any future insurrection, and then departed on the further prosecution of his enterprise.

Wherever he went his arms were victorious; and his victories were always characterised by the same magnanimity. At length he arrived on the confines of that beautiful region comprising lofty and precipitous mountains and rich and delicious plains, afterwards known by the name of the kingdom of Murcia. All this part of the country was defended by the veteran Theodomir, who, by skilful management, had saved a remnant of his forces, after the defeat on the banks of the Guadalete.

Theodomir was a staunch warrior, but a wary and prudent man. He had experienced the folly of opposing the Arabs in open field, where their cavalry and armour gave them such superiority; on their approach, therefore, he assembled all his people capable of bearing arms, and took possession of the cliffs and mountain passes. "Here," said he, "a simple goatherd, who can hurl down rocks and stones, is as good as a warrior armed in proof." In this way he checked and harassed the Moslem army in all its movements; showering down missiles upon it from overhanging precipices, and waylaying it in narrow and rugged defiles, where a few raw troops could make stand against a host.

* Conde, p. i. cap. 14.

Theodomir was in a fair way to baffle his foes and oblige them to withdraw from his territories; unfortunately, however, the wary veteran had two sons with him, young men of hot and heady valour, who considered all this prudence of their father as savouring of cowardice, and who were anxious to try their prowess in the open field. "What glory," said they, "is to be gained by destroying an enemy in this way, from the covert of rocks and thickets?"

"You talk like young men," replied the veteran. "Glory is a prize one may fight for abroad, but safety is the object when the enemy is at the door."

One day, however, the young men succeeded in drawing down their father into the plain. Abdalasis immediately seized on the opportunity, and threw himself between the Goths and their mountain fastnesses. Theodomir saw too late the danger into which he was betrayed. "What can our raw troops do," said he, "against those squadrons of horse that move like castles? Let us make a rapid retreat to Orihuela, and defend ourselves from behind its walls."

"Father," said the eldest son, "it is too late to retreat; remain here with the reserve, while my brother and I advance. Fear nothing; am not I your son, and would I not die to defend you?"

"In truth," replied the veteran, "I have my doubts whether you are my son. But if I remain here, and you should all be killed, where then would be my protection? Come," added he, turning to the second son; "I trust that thou art virtually my son; let us hasten to retreat before it is too late."

"Father," replied the youngest, "I have not a doubt that I am honestly and thoroughly your son, and as such I honour you; but I owe duty likewise to my mother; and when I sallied to the war, she gave me her blessing as long as I should act with valour, but her curse should I prove craven and fly the field. Fear nothing, father; I will defend you while living, and even after you are dead. You shall never fail of an honourable sepulture among your kindred."

"A pestilence on ye both," cried Theodomir, "for a brace of misgotten madmen! What care I, think ye, where ye lay my body when I am dead. One day's existence in a hovel is worth an age of interment in a marble sepulchre. Come, my friends," said he, turning to his principal cava-

liers, "let us leave these hot-headed striplings and make our retreat; if we tarry any longer, the enemy will be upon us."

Upon this the cavaliers and proud hidalgoes drew up scornfully, and tossed their heads: "What do you see in us," said they, "that you think we will show our backs to the enemy? Forward! was ever the good old Gothic watch-word, and with that will we live and die!"

While time was lost in these disputes, the Moslem army kept advancing, until retreat was no longer practicable. The battle was tumultuous and bloody. Theodomir fought like a lion, but it was all in vain: he saw his two sons cut down, and the greater part of their rash companions, while his raw mountain troops fled in all directions.

Seeing there was no longer any hope, he seized the bridle of a favourite page who was near him, and who was about spurring for the mountains. "Part not from me," said he, "but do thou at least attend to my counsel, my son; and, of a truth, I believe thou art my son, for thou art the offspring of one of my handmaids who was kind unto me." And indeed the youth marvellously resembled him. Turning then the reins of his own steed, and giving him the spur, he fled amain from the field, followed by the page; nor did he stop until he arrived within the walls of Orihuela.

Ordering the gates to be barred and bolted, he prepared to receive the enemy. There were but few men in the city capable of bearing arms, most of the youth having fallen in the field. He caused the women, therefore, to clothe themselves in male attire, to put on hats and helmets, to take long reeds in their hands instead of lances, and to cross their hair upon their chins in semblance of beards. With these troops he lined the walls and towers.

It was about the hour of twilight that Abdalasis approached with his army, but he paused when he saw the walls so numerously garrisoned. Then Theodomir took a flag of truce in his hand, and put a herald's tabard on the page, and they two sallied forth to capitulate, and were graciously received by Abdalasis.

"I come," said Theodomir, "on the behalf of the commander of this city, to treat for terms worthy of your magnanimity and of his dignity. You perceive that the city is capable of withstanding a long siege, but he is desirous of sparing the lives of his soldiers. Promise that the inhabitants

shall be at liberty to depart unmolested with their property, and the city will be delivered up to you to-morrow morning without a blow; otherwise we are prepared to fight until not a man be left."

Abdalasis was well pleased to get so powerful a place upon such easy terms, but stipulated that the garrison should lay down their arms. To this Theodomir readily assented; with the exception, however, of the governor and his retinue, which was granted out of consideration for his dignity. The articles of capitulation were then drawn out; and when Abdalasis had affixed his name and seal, Theodomir took the pen and wrote his signature. "Behold in me," said he, "the governor of the city!"

Abdalasis was pleased with the hardihood of the commander of the place in thus venturing personally into his power, and entertained the veteran with still greater honour. When Theodomir returned to the city, he made known the capitulation, and charged the inhabitants to pack up their effects during the night, and be ready to sally forth in the morning.

At the dawn of day the gates were thrown open, and Abdalasis looked to see a great force issuing forth; but, to his surprise, beheld merely Theodomir and his page in battered armour, followed by a multitude of old men, women, and children.

Abdalasis waited until the whole had come forth; then, turning to Theodomir, "Where," cried he, "are the soldiers whom I saw last evening, lining the walls and towers?"

"Soldiers have I none," replied the veteran. "As to my garrison, behold it before you. With these women did I man my walls; and this, my page, is my herald, guard, and retinue."

Upon this the Bishop Oppas and Count Julian exclaimed that the capitulation was a base fraud, and ought not to be complied with; but Abdalasis relished the stratagem of the old soldier, and ordered that the stipulations of the treaty should be faithfully performed. Nay, so high an opinion did he conceive of the subtle wisdom of this commander, that he permitted him to remain in authority over the surrounding country, on his acknowledging allegiance and engaging to pay tribute to the caliph; and all that part of Spain, comprising the beautiful provinces of Murcia and Valencia, was

long after known by the Arabic name of its defender, and is still recorded in Arabian chronicles as "The land of Tadmir."

Having succeeded in subduing this rich and fruitful region, and having gained great renown for his generosity as well as valour, Abdalasis returned with the chief part of his army to the city of Seville.*

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN Muza ben Nosier had sent his son Abdalasis to subdue Seville, he departed for Toledo, to call Taric to account for his disobedience to his orders; for, amidst all his own successes, the prosperous career of that commander preyed upon his mind. What can content the jealous and ambitious heart? As Muza passed through the land, towns and cities submitted to him without resistance; he was lost in wonder at the riches of the country, and the noble monuments of art with which it was adorned: when he beheld the bridges, constructed in ancient times by the Romans, they seemed to him the work, not of men, but of genii. Yet all these admirable objects only made him repine the more, that he had not had the exclusive glory of invading and subduing the land: and exasperated him the more against Taric, for having apparently endeavoured to monopolise the conquest.

Taric heard of his approach, and came forth to meet him at Talavera, accompanied by many of the most distinguished companions of his victories, and with a train of horses and mules laden with spoils, with which he trusted to propitiate the favour of his commander. Their meeting took place on the banks of the rapid river Tietar, which rises in the mountains of Placencia, and throws itself into the Tagus. Muza, in former days, while Taric had acted as his subordinate and indefatigable officer, had cherished and considered him as a second self; but now that he had started up to be a rival, he could not conceal his jealousy. When the veteran came into his presence, he regarded him for a moment with a stern and indignant aspect. "Why hast thou disobeyed my orders?" said he, "I commanded thee to await my arrival with reinforcements, but thou hast rashly overrun the country, endangering the loss of our armies and the ruin of our cause."

* Conde, p. 1. Cronica del moro Rasis. Cron. Gen. España por Alonzo el Sabio, p. iii. cap. 1.

"I have acted," replied Taric, "in such manner as I thought would best serve the cause of Islam; and in so doing I thought to fulfil the wishes of Muza. Whatever I have done has been as your servant. Behold your share, as commander-in-chief, of the spoils which I have collected." So saying, he produced an immense treasure in silver and gold, and costly stuffs, and precious stones, and spread it before Muza.

The anger of the Arab commander was still more kindled at the sight of this booty, for it proved how splendid had been the victories of Taric; but he restrained his wrath for the present, and they proceeded together in moody silence to Toledo. When he entered this royal city, however, and ascended to the ancient palace of the Gothic kings, and reflected that all this had been a scene of triumph to his rival, he could no longer repress his indignation. He demanded of Taric a strict account of all the riches he had gathered in Spain, even of the presents he had reserved for the caliph; and, above all, he made him yield up his favourite trophy, the talismanic table of Solomon. When all this was done, he again upbraided him bitterly with his disobedience of orders, and with the rashness of his conduct. "What blind confidence in fortune hast thou shown," said he, "in overrunning such a country, and assailing such powerful cities with thy scanty force! What madness, to venture everything upon a desperate chance, when thou knewest I was coming with a force to make the victory secure! All thy success has been owing to mere luck, not to judgment nor generalship."

He then bestowed high praises upon the other chieftains for their services in the cause of Islam; but they answered not a word, and their countenances were gloomy and discontented, for they felt the injustice done to their favourite leader. As to Taric, though his eye burned like fire, he kept his passion within bounds. "I have done the best I could to serve God and the caliph," said he, emphatically; "my conscience acquits me, and I trust my sovereign will do the same."

"Perhaps he may," replied Muza bitterly; "but, in the meantime, I cannot confide his interests to a desperado, who is heedless of orders and throws everything at hazard. Such a general is unworthy to be intrusted with the fate of armies."

So saying, he divested Taric of his command, and gave it

to Magued the renegado. The gaunt Taric still maintained an air of stern composure. His only words were, "The caliph will do me justice!" Muza was so transported with passion at this laconic defiance that he ordered him to be thrown into prison, and even threatened his life.

Upon this, Magued el Rumi, though he had risen by the disgrace of Taric, had the generosity to speak out warmly in his favour. "Consider," said he, to Muza, "what may be the consequences of this severity. Taric has many friends in the army; his actions, too, have been signal and illustrious, and entitle him to the highest honours and rewards, instead of disgrace and imprisonment."

The anger of Muza, however, was not to be appeased; and he trusted to justify his measures by despatching missives to the caliph, complaining of the insubordination of Taric, and his rash and headlong conduct. The result proved the wisdom of the caution given by Magued. In the course of a little while, Muza received a humiliating letter from the caliph, ordering him to restore Taric to the command of the soldiers "whom he had so gloriously conducted;" and not to render useless "one of the best swords in Islam!"*

It is thus the envious man brings humiliation and reproach upon himself, in endeavouring to degrade a meritorious rival. When the tidings came of the justice rendered by the caliph to the merits of the veteran, there was general joy throughout the army; and Muza read, in the smiling countenances of every one around him, a severe censure upon his conduct. He concealed, however, his deep humiliation, and affected to obey the orders of his sovereign with great alacrity: he released Taric from prison, feasted him at his own table, and then publicly replaced him at the head of his troops. The army received its favourite veteran with shouts of joy, and celebrated with rejoicings the reconciliation of the commanders; but the shouts of the soldiery were abhorrent to the ears of Muza.

CHAPTER XII.

THE dissensions, which for a time had distracted the conquering army, being appeased, and the Arabian generals being apparently once more reconciled, Muza, as commander-

* Conde, p. i. cap. 15.

in-chief proceeded to complete the enterprise by subjugating the northern parts of Spain. The same expeditious mode of conquest that had been sagaciously adopted by Taric was still pursued: The troops were lightly armed, and freed from every superfluous incumbrance. Each horseman, beside his arms, carried a small sack of provisions, a copper vessel in which to cook them, and a skin which served him for surcoat and for bed. The infantry carried nothing but their arms. To each regiment or squadron was allowed a limited number of sumpter mules and attendants; barely enough to carry their necessary baggage and supplies: nothing was permitted that could needlessly diminish the number of fighting men, delay their rapid movements, or consume their provisions. Strict orders were again issued, prohibiting, on pain of death, all plunder, excepting the camp of an enemy, or cities given up to pillage.*

The armies now took their several lines of march. That under Taric departed towards the north-east; beating up the country towards the source of the Tagus, traversing the chain of Iberian or Arragonian mountains, and pouring down into the plains and valleys watered by the Ebro. It was wonderful to see, in so brief a space of time, such a vast and difficult country penetrated and subdued; and the invading army, like an inundating flood, pouring its streams into the most remote recesses.

While Taric was thus sweeping the country to the north-east, Muza departed in an opposite direction; yet purposing to meet him, and to join their forces in the north. Bending his course westwardly, he made a circuit behind the mountains, and then, advancing into the open country, displayed his banners before Salamanca, which surrendered without resistance. From thence he continued on towards Astorga, receiving the terrified submission of the land; then turning up the valley of the Douro, he ascended the course of that famous river towards the east: crossed the Sierra de Moncayo, and, arriving on the banks of the Ebro, marched down along its stream, until he approached the strong city of Saragossa, the citadel of all that part of Spain. In this place had taken refuge many of the most valiant of the Gothic warriors; the remnants of armies, and fugitives from conquered cities. It was one of the last rallying points of the land. When

* Condé, p. i. cap. 15.

Muza arrived, Taric had already been for some time before the place, laying close siege: the inhabitants were pressed by famine, and had suffered great losses in repeated combats; but there was a spirit and obstinacy in their resistance surpassing anything that had yet been witnessed by the invaders.

Muza now took command of the siege, and ordered a general assault upon the walls. The Moslems planted their scaling ladders, and mounted with their accustomed intrepidity, but were vigorously resisted; nor could all their efforts obtain them a footing upon the battlements. While they were thus assailing the walls, Count Julian ordered a heap of combustibles to be placed against one of the gates, and set on fire. The inhabitants attempted in vain from the barbican to extinguish the flames. They burnt so fiercely, that in a little while the gate fell from the hinges. Count Julian galloped into the city mounted upon a powerful charger, himself and his steed all covered with mail. He was followed by three hundred of his partisans, and supported by Magued, the renegado, with a troop of horse.

The inhabitants disputed every street and public square; they made barriers of dead bodies, fighting behind these ramparts of their slaughtered countrymen. Every window and roof was filled with combatants; the very women and children joined in the desperate fight, throwing down stones and missiles of all kinds, and scalding water upon the enemy.

The battle raged until the hour of vespers, when the principal inhabitants held a parley, and capitulated for a surrender. Muza had been incensed at their obstinate resistance, which had cost the lives of so many of his soldiers; he knew also that in the city were collected the riches of many of the towns of eastern Spain. He demanded, therefore, beside the usual terms, a heavy sum to be paid down by the citizens, called the contribution of blood, as by this they redeemed themselves from the edge of the sword. The people were obliged to comply. They collected all the jewels of their richest families, and all the ornaments of their temples, and laid them at the feet of Muza; and placed in his power many of their noblest youths as hostages. A strong garrison was then appointed; and thus the fierce city of Saragossa was subdued to the yoke of the conqueror.

The Arab generals pursued their conquests even to the foot of the Pyrenees: Taric then descended along the course of the Ebro, and continued along the Mediterranean coast; subduing the famous city of Valencia, with its rich and beautiful domains, and carrying the success of his arms even to Denia.

Muza undertook with his host a wider range of conquest. He overcame the cities of Barcelona, Gerona, and others that lay on the skirts of the eastern mountains: then crossing into the land of the Franks, he captured the city of Narbonne: in a temple of which he found seven equestrian images of silver, which he brought off as trophies of his victory.* Returning into Spain, he scoured its northern regions along Gallicia and the Asturias; passed triumphantly through Lusitania, and arrived once more in Andalusia, covered with laurels, and enriched with immense spoils.

Thus was completed the subjugation of unhappy Spain. All its cities and fortresses, and strong-holds, were in the hands of the Saracens, excepting some of the wild mountain tracts that bordered the Atlantic, and extended towards the north. Here, then, the story of the conquest might conclude, but that the indefatigable chronicler, Fray Antonio Agapida, goes on to record the fate of those persons who were most renowned in the enterprise. We shall follow his steps, and avail ourselves of his information, laboriously collected from various sources; and, truly, the story of each of the actors in this great historical drama bears with it its striking moral, and is full of admonition and instruction.

CHAPTER XIII.

The heart of Muza ben Nozier was now lifted up, for he considered his glory complete. He held a sway that might have gratified the ambition of the proudest sovereign, for all western Africa and the newly acquired peninsula of Spain were obedient to his rule; and he was renowned throughout all the lands of Islam as the great conqueror of the west. But sudden humiliation awaited him in the very moment of his highest triumph.

Notwithstanding the outward reconciliation of Muza and Taric, a deep and implacable hostility continued to exist between them; and each had busy partisans who distracted the

* Conde, p. i. cap. 16.

armies by their feuds. Letters were incessantly despatched to Damascus by either party, exalting the merits of their own leader and decrying his rival. Taric was represented as rash, arbitrary, and prodigal, and as injuring the discipline of the army, by sometimes treating it with extreme rigour, and at other times giving way to licentiousness and profusion. Muza was lauded as prudent, sagacious, dignified, and systematic in his dealings. The friends of Taric, on the other hand, represented him as brave, generous, and high-minded; scrupulous in reserving to his sovereign his rightful share of the spoils, but distributing the rest bounteously among his soldiers, and thus increasing their alacrity in the service. "Muza, on the contrary," said they, "is grasping and insatiable: he levies intolerable contributions, and collects immense treasure, but sweeps it all into his own coffers."

The caliph was at length wearied out by these complaints, and feared that the safety of the cause might be endangered by the dissensions of the rival generals. He sent letters, therefore, ordering them to leave suitable persons in charge of their several commands, and appear, forthwith, before him at Damascus.

Such was the greeting from his sovereign that awaited Muza on his return from the conquest of northern Spain. It was a grievous blow to a man of his pride and ambition: but he prepared instantly to obey. He returned to Cordova, collecting by the way all the treasures he had deposited in various places. At that city he called a meeting of his principal officers, and of the leaders of the faction of apostate Christians, and made them all do homage to his son Abdalasis, as emir or governor of Spain. He gave this favourite son much sage advice for the regulation of his conduct, and left with him his nephew Ayub, a man greatly honoured by the Moslems for his wisdom and discretion; exhorting Abdalasis to consult him on all occasions, and consider him as his bosom counsellor. He made a parting address to his adherents, full of cheerful confidence: assuring them that he would soon return, loaded with new favours and honours by his sovereign, and enabled to reward them all for their faithful services.

When Muza sallied forth from Cordova to repair to Damascus, his cavalgada appeared like the sumptuous pageant of some Oriental potentate; for he had numerous guards and attendants splendidly armed and arrayed, together with four

hundred hostages, who were youthful cavaliers of the noblest families of the Goths, and a great number of captives of both sexes, chosen for their beauty, and intended as presents for the caliph. Then there was a vast train of beasts of burden, laden with the plunder of Spain; for he took with him all the wealth he had collected in his conquests, and all the share that had been set apart for his sovereign. With this display of trophies and spoils, showing the magnificence of the land he had conquered, he looked forward with confidence to silence the calumnies of his foes.

As he traversed the valley of the Guadalquivir, he often turned and looked back wistfully upon Cordova; and, at the distance of a league, when about to lose sight of it, he checked his steed upon the summit of a hill, and gazed for a long time upon its palaces and towers. "O Cordova!" exclaimed he, "great and glorious art thou among cities, and abundant in all delights. With grief and sorrow do I part from thee; for sure I am it would give me length of days to abide within thy pleasant walls!" When he had uttered these words, say the Arabian chronicles, he resumed his wayfaring; but his eyes were bent upon the ground, and frequent sighs bespoke the heaviness of his heart.

Embarking at Cadiz, he passed over to Africa with all his people and effects, to regulate his government in that country. He divided the command between his sons Abdelola and Meruan, leaving the former in Tangier, and the latter in Cairvan. Thus having secured, as he thought, the power and prosperity of his family, by placing all his sons as his lieutenants in the country he had conquered, he departed for Syria, bearing with him the sumptuous spoils of the west.

While Muza was thus disposing of his commands, and moving cumbrously under the weight of wealth, the veteran Taric was more speedy and alert in obeying the summons of the caliph. He knew the importance, where complaints were to be heard, of being first in presence of the judge; beside he was ever ready to march at a moment's warning, and had nothing to impede him in his movements. The spoils he had made in his conquests had either been shared among his soldiers, or yielded up to Muza, or squandered away with open-handed profusion. He appeared in Syria with a small train of war-worn followers, and had no other trophies to show than his battered armour, and a body seamed with scars.

He was received, however, with rapture by the multitude, who crowded to behold one of those conquerors of the west, whose wonderful achievements were the theme of every tongue. They were charmed with his gaunt and martial air, his hard sunburnt features, and his scathed eye. All hail," cried they, "to the sword of Islam, the terror of the unbelievers! Behold the true model of a warrior, who despises gain, and seeks for nought but glory."

Taric was graciously received by the caliph, who asked tidings of his victories. He gave a soldier-like account of his actions, frank and full, without any feigned modesty, yet without vain-glory. "Commander of the faithful," said he, "I bring thee no silver, nor gold, nor precious stones, nor captives; for what spoils I did not share with my soldiers, I gave up to Muza as my commander. How I have conducted myself, the honourable warriors of thy host will tell thee; nay, let our enemies, the Christians, be asked if I have ever shown myself cowardly, or cruel, or rapacious."

"What kind of people are these Christians?" demanded the caliph.

"The Spaniards," replied Taric, "are lions in their castles, eagles in their saddles, but mere women when on foot. When vanquished, they escape like goats to the mountains, for they need not see the ground they tread on."

"And tell me of the Moors of Barbary."

"They are like Arabs in the fierceness and dexterity of their attacks, and in their knowledge of the stratagems of war; they resemble them, too, in feature, in fortitude, and hospitality; but they are the most perfidious people upon earth, and never regard promise or plighted faith."

"And the people of Afranc; what sayest thou of them?"

"They are infinite in number, rapid in the onset, fierce in battle, but confused and headlong in flight."

"And how fared it with thee among these people? Did they sometimes vanquish thee?"

"Never, by Allah!" cried Taric with honest warmth, "never did a banner of mine fly the field. Though the enemy were two to one, my Moslems never shunned the combat!"

The caliph was well pleased with the martial bluntness of the veteran, and showed him great honour; and wherever Taric appeared he was the idol of the populace.

CHAPTER XIV.

SHORTLY after the arrival of Taric el Tuerto at Damascus the caliph fell dangerously ill, insomuch that his life was despaired of. During his illness, tidings were brought that Muza ben Nozier had entered Syria with a vast cavalcade, bearing all the riches and trophies gained in the western conquests. Now Suleiman ben Abdelmelec, brother to the caliph, was successor to the throne; and he saw that his brother had not long to live, and wished to grace the commencement of his reign by this triumphant display of the spoils of Christendom: he sent messengers, therefore, to Muza, saying, "The caliph is ill, and cannot receive thee at present; I pray thee tarry on the road until his recovery." Muza, however, paid no attention to the messages of Suleiman, but rather hastened his march to arrive before the death of the caliph. And Suleiman treasured up his conduct in his heart.

Muza entered the city in a kind of triumph, with a long train of horses, and mules, and camels laden with treasure, and with the four hundred sons of Gothic nobles as hostages, each decorated with a diadem and a girdle of gold; and with one hundred Christian damsels, whose beauty dazzled all beholders. As he passed through the streets, he ordered purses of gold to be thrown among the populace, who rent the air with acclamations. "Behold," cried they, "the veritable conqueror of the unbelievers! Behold the true model of a conqueror, who brings home wealth to his country!" And they heaped benedictions on the head of Muza.

The caliph Walid Almanzor rose from his couch of illness to receive the emir; who, when he repaired to the palace, filled one of its great courts with treasures of all kinds: the halls, too, were thronged with the youthful hostages, magnificently attired, and with Christian damsels, lovely as the houries of Paradise. When the caliph demanded an account of the conquest of Spain, he gave it with great eloquence; but, in describing the various victories, he made no mention of the name of Taric, but spoke as if everything had been effected by himself. He then presented the spoils of the Christians as if they had been all taken by his own hands; and when he delivered to the caliph the miraculous table of Solomon, he dwelt with animation on the virtues of that inestimable talisman.

Upon this Taric, who was present, could no longer hold his peace. "Commander of the faithful!" said he, "examine this precious table, if any part be wanting." The caliph examined the table, which was composed of a single emerald, and he found that one foot was supplied by a foot of gold. The caliph turned to Muza and said, "Where is the other foot of the table?" Muza answered, "I know not; one foot was wanting when it came into my hands." Upon this, Taric drew from beneath his robe a foot of emerald of like workmanship to the others, and fitting exactly to the table. "Behold, O Commander of the faithful!" cried he, "a proof of the real finder of the table; and so is it with the greater part of the spoils exhibited by Muza as trophies of his achievements. It was I who gained them, and who captured the cities in which they were found. If you want proof, demand of these Christian cavaliers here present, most of whom I captured; demand of those Moslem warriors who aided me in my battles."

Muza was confounded for a moment, but attempted to vindicate himself. "I spake," said he, "as the chief of your armies, under whose orders and banners this conquest was achieved. The actions of the soldier are the actions of the commander. In a great victory, it is not supposed that the chief of the army takes all the captives, or kills all the slain, or gathers all the booty, though all are enumerated in the records of his triumph." The caliph, however, was wroth, and heeded not his words. "You have vaunted your own deserts," said he, "and have forgotten the deserts of others; nay, you have sought to debase another who has loyally served his sovereign: the reward of your envy and covetousness be upon your head!" So saying, he bestowed a great part of the spoils upon Taric and the other chiefs, but gave nothing to Muza; and the veteran retired amidst the sneers and murmurs of those present.

In a few days the Caliph Walid died, and was succeeded by his brother Suleiman. The new sovereign cherished deep resentment against Muza for having presented himself at court contrary to his command, and he listened readily to the calumnies of his enemies; for Muza had been too illustrious in his deeds not to have many enemies. All now took courage when they found he was out of favour, and they heaped slanders on his head; charging him with embezzling much of

the share of the booty belonging to the sovereign. The new caliph lent a willing ear to the accusation, and commanded him to render up all that he had pillaged from Spain. The loss of his riches might have been borne with fortitude by Muza, but the stigma upon his fame filled his heart with bitterness. "I have been a faithful servant to the throne from my youth upwards," said he, "and now am I degraded in my old age. I care not for wealth, I care not for life, but let me not be deprived of that honour which God has bestowed upon me!"

The caliph was still more exasperated at his repining, and stripped him of his commands: confiscated his effects; fined him two hundred thousand pesants of gold, and ordered that he should be scourged and exposed to the noontide sun, and afterwards thrown into prison.* The populace, also, reviled and scoffed at him in his misery; and as they beheld him led forth to the public gaze, and fainting in the sun, they pointed at him with derision, and exclaimed—"Behold the envious man and the impostor: this is he who pretended to have conquered the land of the unbelievers!"

CHAPTER XV.

WHILE these events were happening in Syria, the youthful Abdalasis, the son of Muza, remained as emir or governor of Spain. He was of a generous and benignant disposition, but he was open and confiding, and easily led away by the opinions of those he loved. Fortunately his father had left with him, as a bosom counsellor, the discreet Ayub, the nephew of Muza: aided by his advice, he, for some time, administered the public affairs prudently and prosperously.

Not long after the departure of his father, he received a letter from him, written while on his journey to Syria; it was to the following purport:—

"Beloved son; honour of thy lineage; Allah guard thee from all harm and peril! Listen to the words of thy father. Avoid all treachery, though it should promise great advantage, and trust not in him who counsels it, even though he should be a brother. The company of traitors put far from thee, for how canst thou be certain that he who has proved false to others will prove true to thee? Beware, O my son, of the

* Conde, part i. cap 17.

seductions of love. It is an idle passion, which enfeebles the heart and blinds the judgment; it renders the mighty weak, and makes slaves of princes. If thou shouldst discover any foible of a vicious kind springing up in thy nature, pluck it forth, whatever pang it cost thee. Every error, while new, may easily be weeded out, but if suffered to take root it flourishes and bears seed, and produces fruit a hundred-fold. Follow these counsels, O son of my affections, and thou shalt live secure."

Abdalasis meditated upon this letter, for some part of it seemed to contain a mystery which he could not comprehend. He called to him his cousin and counsellor, the discreet Ayub. "What means my father," said he, "in cautioning me against treachery and treason? Does he think my nature so base that it could descend to such means?"

Ayub read the letter attentively. "Thy father," said he, "would put thee on thy guard against the traitors Julian and Oppas, and those of their party who surround thee. What love canst thou expect from men who have been unnatural to their kindred, and what loyalty from wretches who have betrayed their country?"

Abdalasis was satisfied with the interpretation, and he acted accordingly. He had long loathed all communion with these men; for there is nothing which the open, ingenuous nature so much abhors as duplicity and treason. Policy, too, no longer required their agency; they had rendered their infamous service, and had no longer a country to betray; but they might turn and betray their employers. Abdalasis, therefore, removed them to a distance from his court, and placed them in situations where they could do no harm, and he warned his commanders from being in anywise influenced by their counsels, or aided by their arms.

He now confided entirely in his Arabian troops, and in the Moorish squadrons from Africa, and with their aid he completed the conquest of Lusitania to the ultimate parts of the Algarbe, or west, even to the shores of the great Ocean sea.* From hence he sent his generals to overrun all those vast and rugged sierras, which rise like ramparts along the ocean

* Algarbe, or Algarbia, in Arabic signifies the west, as Axarkia is the east, Algufia the north, and Aquibla the south. This will serve to explain some of the geographical names on the peninsula which are of Arabian origin.

borders of the peninsula, and they carried the standard of Islam in triumph even to the mountains of Biscay, collecting all manner of precious spoil.

"It is not enough, O Abdalasis," said Ayub, "that we conquer and rule this country with the sword; if we wish our dominion to be secure, we must cultivate the arts of peace, and study to secure the confidence, and promote the welfare, of the people we have conquered." Abdalasis relished counsel which accorded so well with his own beneficent nature. He endeavoured, therefore, to allay the ferment and confusion of the conquest; forbade, under rigorous punishment, all wanton spoil or oppression, and protected the native inhabitants in the enjoyment and cultivation of their lands, and the pursuit of all useful occupations. By the advice of Ayub also, he encouraged great numbers of industrious Moors and Arabs to emigrate from Africa, and gave them houses and lands; thus introducing a peaceful Mahometan population into the conquered provinces.

The good effect of the counsels of Ayub were soon apparent. Instead of a sudden but transient influx of wealth, made by the ruin of the land, which left the country desolate, a regular and permanent revenue sprang up, produced by reviving prosperity, and gathered without violence. Abdalasis ordered it to be faithfully collected, and deposited in coffers by public officers appointed in each province for the purpose, and the whole was sent by ten deputies to Damascus, to be laid at the feet of the caliph; not as the spoils of a vanquished country, but as the peaceful trophies of a wisely administered government.

The common herd of warlike adventurers, the mere men of the sword, who had thronged to Spain for the purpose of ravage and rapine, were disappointed at being thus checked in their career, and at seeing the reign of terror and violence drawing to a close. "What manner of leader is this," said they, "who forbids us to make spoil of the enemies of Islam, and to enjoy the land we have wrested from the unbelievers?" The partisans of Julian also whispered their calumnies. "Behold," said they, "with what kindness he treats the enemies of your faith: all the Christians who have borne arms against you, and withstood your entrance into the land, are favoured and protected; but it is enough for a Christian to have befriended the cause of the Moslems to be singled out by Abda-

basis for persecution, and to be driven with scorn from his presence."

These insinuations fermented the discontent of the turbulent and rapacious among the Moslems, but all the friends of peace, and order, and good government, applauded the moderation of the youthful emir.

CHAPTER XVI.

Abdalasis had fixed his seat of government at Seville, as permitting easy and frequent communications with the coast of Africa. His palace was of noble architecture, with delightful gardens extending to the banks of the Guadalquivir. In a part of this palace resided many of the most beautiful Christian females, who were detained as captives, or rather hostages, to ensure the tranquillity of the country. Those who were of noble rank were entertained in luxury and magnificence; slaves were appointed to attend upon them, and they were arrayed in the richest apparel, and decorated with the most precious jewels. Those of tender age were taught all graceful accomplishments; and even where tasks were imposed, they were of the most elegant and agreeable kind. They embroidered, they sang, they danced, and passed their time in pleasing revelry. Many were lulled by this easy and voluptuous existence; the scenes of horror through which they had passed were gradually effaced from their minds, and a desire was often awakened of rendering themselves pleasing in the eyes of their conquerors.

After his return from his campaign in Lusitania, and during the intervals of public duty, Abdalasis solaced himself in the repose of this palace, and in the society of these Christian captives. He remarked one among them who ever sat apart, and neither joined in the labours nor sports of her companions. She was lofty in her demeanour, and the others always paid her reverence; yet sorrow had given a softness to her charms, and rendered her beauty touching to the heart. Abdalasis found her one day in the garden with her companions: they had adorned their heads with flowers, and were singing the songs of their country; but she sat by herself and wept. The youthful emir was moved by her tears, and accosted her in gentle accents. "O, fairest of women," said he, "why dost thou weep, and why is thy heart troubled?" "Alas!" re-

plied she, "have I not cause to weep, seeing how sad is my condition, and how great the height from which I have fallen? In me you behold the wretched Exilona, but lately the wife of Roderick, and the Queen of Spain, now a captive and a slave!" And, having said these words, she cast her eyes upon the earth, and her tears began to flow afresh.

The generous feelings of Abdalasis were aroused at the sight of beauty and royalty in tears. He gave orders that Exilona should be entertained in a style befitting her former rank; he appointed a train of female attendants to wait upon her, and a guard of honour to protect her from all intrusion. All the time that he could spare from public concerns was passed in her society; and he even neglected his divan, and suffered his counsellors to attend in vain, while he lingered in the apartments and gardens of the palace, listening to the voice of Exilona.

The discreet Ayub saw the danger into which he was falling. "Oh Abdalasis!" said he, "remember the words of thy father. 'Beware, my son,' said he, 'of the seductions of love. It renders the mighty weak, and makes slaves of princes!'" A blush kindled on the cheek of Abdalasis, and he was silent for a moment. "Why," said he, at length, "do you seek to charge me with such weakness? It is one thing to be infatuated by the charms of a woman, and another to be touched by her misfortunes. It is the duty of my station to console a princess who has been reduced to the lowest humiliation by the triumphs of our arms. In doing so I do but listen to the dictates of true magnanimity."

Ayub was silent, but his brow was clouded; and for once Abdalasis parted in discontent from his counsellor. In proportion as he was dissatisfied with others or with himself, he sought the society of Exilona; for there was a charm in her conversation that banished every care. He daily became more and more enamoured; and Exilona gradually ceased to weep, and began to listen with secret pleasure to the words of her Arab lover. When, however, he sought to urge his passion, she recollected the light estimation in which her sex was held by the followers of Mahomet, and assumed a countenance grave and severe.

"Fortune," said she, "has cast me at thy feet; behold I am thy captive and thy spoil. But though my person is in thy power, my soul is unsubdued; and know that, should I

lack force to defend my honour, I have resolution to wash out all stain upon it with my blood. I trust, however, in thy courtesy as a cavalier to respect me in my reverses, remembering what I have been; and that, though the crown has been wrested from my brow, the royal blood still warms within my veins."*

The lofty spirit of Exilona, and her proud repulse, served but to increase the passion of Abdalasis. He besought her to unite her destiny with his, and share his state and power, promising that she should have no rival nor co-partner in his heart. Whatever scruples the captive queen might originally have felt to a union with one of the conquerors of her lord, and an enemy of her adopted faith, they were easily vanquished; and she became the bride of Abdalasis. He would fain have persuaded her to return to the faith of her fathers; but though of Moorish origin, and brought up in the doctrines of Islam, she was too thorough a convert to Christianity to consent, and looked back with disgust upon a religion that admitted a plurality of wives.

When the sage Ayub heard of the resolution of Abdalasis to espouse Exilona he was in despair. "Alas, my cousin!" said he, "what infatuation possesses thee? Hast thou then entirely forgotten the letter of thy father? 'Beware, my son,' said he, 'of love: it is an idle passion, which enfeebles the heart and blinds the judgment.'" But Abdalasis interrupted him with impatience. "My father," said he, "spake but of the blandishments of wanton love; against these I am secured by my virtuous passion for Exilona."

Ayub would fain have impressed upon him the dangers he ran of awakening suspicion in the caliph, and discontent among the Moslems, by wedding the queen of the conquered Roderick, and one who was an enemy to the religion of Mahomet; but the youthful lover only listened to his passion. Their nuptials were celebrated at Seville with great pomp and rejoicings, and he gave his bride the name of Omalisam; that is to say, she of the precious jewels;† but she continued to be known among the Christians by the name of Exilona.

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* Faxardo, Corona, Gothica, tome i. part 492. Joan. Mar. de Reb. Hisp. lib. vi. cap. 27.

† Conde, part i. cap. 17.

CHAPTER XVII.

Possession, instead of cooling the passion of Abdalasis, only added to its force; he became blindly enamoured of his beautiful bride, and consulted her will in all things; nay, having lost all relish for the advice of the discreet Ayub, he was even guided by the counsels of his wife in the affairs of government. Exilona, unfortunately, had once been a queen, and she could not remember her regal glories without regret. She saw that Abdalasis had great power in the land; greater even than had been possessed by the Gothic kings; but she considered it as wanting in true splendour until his brows should be encircled with the outward badge of royalty. One day, when they were alone in the palace of Seville, and the heart of Abdalasis was given up to tenderness, she addressed him in fond yet timid accents. "Will not my lord be offended," said she, "if I make an unwelcome request?" Abdalasis regarded her with a smile. "What canst thou ask of me, Exilona," said he, "that it would not be a happiness for me to grant?" Then Exilona produced a crown of gold, sparkling with jewels, which had belonged to the king, Don Roderick, and said, "Behold, thou art king in authority, be so in thy outward state. There is majesty and glory in a crown; it gives a sanctity to power." Then putting the crown upon his head, she held a mirror before him that he might behold the majesty of his appearance. Abdalasis chid her fondly, and put the crown away from him; but Exilona persisted in her prayer. "Never," said she, "has there been a king in Spain that did not wear a crown." So Abdalasis suffered himself to be beguiled by the blandishments of his wife, and to be invested with the crown and sceptre and other signs of royalty.*

It is affirmed by ancient and discreet chroniclers, that Abdalasis only assumed this royal state in the privacy of his palace, and to gratify the eye of his youthful bride: but where was a secret ever confined within the walls of a palace? The assumption of the insignia of the ancient Gothic kings was soon rumoured about, and caused the most violent suspicions. The Moslems had already felt jealous of the ascendancy of this beautiful woman; and it was now confi-

* Cron. Gen. de Alonzo el Sabio, part 3. Joan. Mar. de Reb. Hisp. lib. vi. cap. 27. Conde, part i. cap. 19.

dently asserted that Abdalasis, won by her persuasions, had secretly turned Christian.

The enemies of Abdalasis, those whose rapacious spirits had been kept in check by the beneficence of his rule, seized upon this occasion to ruin him. They sent letters to Damascus accusing him of apostacy, and of an intention to seize upon the throne in right of his wife, Exilona, as widow of the late King Roderick. It was added, that the Christians were prepared to flock to his standard, as the only means of regaining ascendancy in their country.

These accusations arrived at Damascus just after the accession of the sanguinary Suleiman to the throne, and in the height of his persecution of the unfortunate Muza. The caliph waited for no proofs in confirmation; he immediately sent private orders that Abdalasis should be put to death, and that the same fate should be dealt to his two brothers who governed in Africa, as a sure means of crushing the conspiracy of this ambitious family.

The mandate for the death of Abdalasis was sent to Abhilbar ben Obeidah and Zeyd ben Nabegat, both of whom had been cherished friends of Muza, and had lived in intimate favour and companionship with his son. When they read the fatal parchment, the scroll fell from their trembling hands. "Can such hostility exist against the family of Muza?" exclaimed they. "Is this the reward for such great and glorious services?" The cavaliers remained for some time plunged in horror and consternation. The order, however, was absolute, and left them no discretion. "Allah is great," said they, "and commands us to obey our sovereign." So they prepared to execute the bloody mandate with the blind fidelity of Moslems.

It was necessary to proceed with caution. The open and magnanimous character of Abdalasis had won the hearts of a great part of the soldiery, and his magnificence pleased the cavaliers who formed his guard: it was feared, therefore, that a sanguinary opposition would be made to any attempt upon his person. The rabble, however, had been embittered against him from his having restrained their depredations, and because they thought him an apostate in his heart, secretly bent upon betraying them to the Christians. While, therefore, the two officers made vigilant dispositions to check any movement on the part of the soldiery, they let loose the blind fury

of the populace, by publishing the fatal mandate. In a moment the city was in a ferment, and there was a ferocious emulation who should be the first to execute the orders of the caliph.

Abdalasis was at this time at a palace in the country not far from Seville, commanding a delightful view of the fertile plain of the Guadalquivir. Hither he was accustomed to retire from the tumult of the court, and to pass his time among groves and fountains, and the sweet repose of gardens, in the society of Exilona. It was the dawn of day, the hour of early prayer, when the furious populace arrived at this retreat. Abdalasis was offering up his orisons in a small mosque which he had erected for the use of the neighbouring peasantry. Exilona was in a chapel in the interior of the palace, where her confessor, a holy friar, was performing mass. They were both surprised at their devotions, and dragged forth by the hands of the rabble. A few guards, who attended at the palace, would have made defence; but they were overawed by the sight of the written mandate of the caliph.

The captives were borne in triumph to Seville. All the beneficent virtues of Abdalasis were forgotten; nor had the charms of Exilona any effect in softening the hearts of the populace. The brutal eagerness to shed blood, which seems inherent in human nature, was awakened; and woe to the victims when that eagerness is quickened by religious hate! The illustrious couple, adorned with all the graces of youth and beauty, were hurried to a scaffold in the great square of Seville, and there beheaded, amidst the shouts and execrations of an infatuated multitude. Their bodies were left exposed upon the ground, and would have been devoured by dogs, had they not been gathered at night by some friendly hand, and poorly interred in one of the courts of their late dwelling.

Thus terminated the loves and lives of Abdalasis and Exilona, in the year of the Incarnation seven hundred and fourteen. Their names were held sacred as martyrs to the Christian faith: but many read in their untimely fate a lesson against ambition and vain-glory: having sacrificed real power and substantial rule to the glittering bauble of a crown.

The head of Abdalasis was embalmed, and enclosed in a

casket, and sent to Syria to the cruel Suleiman. The messenger who bore it overtook the caliph as he was performing a pilgrimage to Mecca. Muza was among the courtiers in his train, having been released from prison. On opening the casket, and regarding its contents, the eyes of the tyrant sparkled with malignant satisfaction. Calling the unhappy father to his side: "Muza," said he, "dost thou know this head?" The veteran recognised the features of his beloved son, and he turned his face away with anguish. "Yes! well do I know it," replied he: "and may the curse of God light upon him who has destroyed a better man than himself."

Without adding another word, he retired to Mount Deran, a prey to devouring melancholy. He shortly after received tidings of the death of his two sons, whom he had left in the government of Western Africa, and who had fallen victims to the jealous suspicions of the caliph. His advanced age was not proof against these repeated blows, and this utter ruin of his late prosperous family; and he sank into his grave, sorrowing and broken-hearted.

Such was the lamentable end of the conqueror of Spain; whose great achievements were not sufficient to atone, in the eye of his sovereign, for a weakness to which all men ambitious of renown are subject; and whose triumphs eventually brought persecution upon himself, and untimely death upon his children.

Here ends the legend of the Subjugation of Spain.

LEGEND OF COUNT JULIAN AND HIS FAMILY.

In the preceding legends is darkly shadowed out a true story of the woes of Spain. It is a story full of wholesome admonition, rebuking the insolence of human pride, and the vanity of human ambition, and showing the futility of all greatness that is not strongly based on virtue. We have seen, in brief space of time, most of the actors in this historic drama disappearing, one by one, from the scene, and going down, conqueror and conquered, to gloomy and unhonoured graves. It remains to close this eventful history,

by holding up as a signal warning the fate of the traitor, whose perfidious scheme of vengeance brought ruin on his native land.

Many and various are the accounts given in ancient chronicles of the fortunes of Count Julian and his family; and many are the traditions on the subject still extant among the populace of Spain, and perpetuated in those countless ballads sung by peasants and muleteers, which spread a singular charm over the whole of this romantic land.

He who has travelled in Spain in the true way in which the country ought to be travelled; sojourning in its remote provinces; rambling among the rugged defiles and secluded valleys of its mountains; and making himself familiar with the people in their out-of-the-way hamlets, and rarely visited neighbourhoods, will remember many a group of travellers and muleteers, gathered of an evening around the door or the spacious hearth of a mountain venta, wrapped in their brown cloaks, and listening with grave and profound attention to the long historic ballad of some rustic troubadour, either recited with the true *ore rotundo* and modulated cadences of Spanish elocution, or chanted to the tinkling of a guitar. In this way, he may have heard the doleful end of Count Julian and his family recounted in traditionary rhymes, that have been handed down from generation to generation. The particulars, however, of the following wild legend are chiefly gathered from the writings of the pseudo Moor, Rasis: how far they may be safely taken as historic facts, it is impossible now to ascertain; we must content ourselves, therefore, with their answering to the exactions of poetic justice.

As yet everything had prospered with Count Julian. He had gratified his vengeance: he had been successful in his treason, and had acquired countless riches from the ruin of his country. But it is not outward success that constitutes prosperity. The tree flourishes with fruit and foliage while blasted and withering at the heart. Wherever he went, Count Julian read hatred in every eye. The Christians cursed him as the cause of all their woe: the Moslems despised and distrusted him as a traitor. Men whispered together as he approached, and then turned away in scorn: and mothers snatched away their children with horror if he offered to caress them He withered under the execrations of his fellow men, and last, and worst of all, he began to loathe

himself. He tried in vain to persuade himself that he had but taken a justifiable vengeance: he felt that no personal wrong can justify the crime of treason to one's country.

For a time, he sought in luxurious indulgence to soothe, or forget, the miseries of the mind. He assembled round him every pleasure and gratification that boundless wealth could purchase; but all in vain. He had no relish for the dainties of his board; music had no charm wherewith to lull his soul, and remorse drove slumber from his pillow. He sent to Ceuta for his wife Frandina, his daughter Florinda, and his youthful son Alarbot; hoping in the bosom of his family to find that sympathy and kindness which he could no longer meet with in the world. Their presence, however, brought him no alleviation. Florinda, the daughter of his heart, for whose sake he had undertaken this signal vengeance, was sinking a victim to its effects. Wherever she went, she found herself a bye-word of shame and reproach. The outrage she had suffered was imputed to her as wantonness, and her calamity was magnified into a crime. The Christians never mentioned her name without a curse, and the Moslems, the gainers by her misfortune, spake of her only by the appellation of Cava, the vilest epithet they could apply to woman.

But the opprobrium of the world was nothing to the upbraidings of her own heart. She charged herself with all the miseries of these disastrous wars; the deaths of so many gallant cavaliers; the conquest and perdition of her country. The anguish of her mind preyed upon the beauty of her person. Her eye, once soft and tender in its expression, became wild and haggard; her cheek lost its bloom, and became hollow and pallid; and at times there was desperation in her words. When her father sought to embrace her, she withdrew with shuddering from his arms; for she thought of his treason, and the ruin it had brought upon Spain. Her wretchedness increased after her return to her native country, until it rose to a degree of frenzy. One day, when she was walking with her parents in the garden of their palace, she entered a tower, and, having barred the door, ascended to the battlements. From thence she called to them in piercing accents, expressive of her insupportable anguish and desperate determination. "Let this city," said she, "be henceforth called Malacca, in memorial of the most

wretched of women, who therein put an end to her days." So saying, she threw herself headlong from the tower, and was dashed to pieces. The city, adds the ancient chronicler, received the name thus given it, though afterwards softened to Malaga, which it still retains; in memory of the tragical end of Florinda.

The Countess Frandina abandoned this scene of woe, and returned to Ceuta, accompanied by her infant son. She took with her the remains of her unfortunate daughter, and gave them honourable sepulture in a mausoleum of the chapel belonging to the citadel. Count Julian departed for Carthagena, where he remained plunged in horror at this doleful event.

About this time, the cruel Suleiman, having destroyed the family of Muza, had sent an Arab general, named Alahor, to succeed Abdalasis as emir or governor of Spain. The new emir was of a cruel and suspicious nature, and commenced his sway with a stern severity that soon made those under his command look back with regret to the easy rule of Abdalasis. He regarded, with an eye of distrust, the renegado Christians who had aided in the conquest, and who bore arms in the service of the Moslems; but his deepest suspicions fell upon Count Julian. "He has been a traitor to his own countrymen," said he; "how can we be sure that he will not prove traitor to us?"

A sudden insurrection of the Christians who had taken refuge in the Asturian mountains quickened his suspicions, and inspired him with fears of some dangerous conspiracy against his power. In the height of his anxiety, he bethought him of an Arabian sage, named Yuza, who had accompanied him from Africa. This son of science was withered in form, and looked as if he had outlived the usual term of mortal life. In the course of his studies and travels in the east, he had collected the knowledge and experience of ages; being skilled in astrology, and, it is said, in necromancy, and possessing the marvellous gift of prophecy or divination. To this expounder of mysteries Alahor applied, to learn whether any secret treason menaced his safety.

The astrologer listened with deep attention and overwhelming brow to all the surmises and suspicions of the emir; then shut himself up to consult his books, and commune with those supernatural intelligences subservient to his wisdom. At an

appointed hour, the emir sought him in his cell. It was filled with the smoke of perfumes: squares and circles and various diagrams were described upon the floor: and the astrologer was poring over a scroll of parchment covered with cabalistic characters. He received Alahor with a gloomy and sinister aspect; pretending to have discovered fearful portents in the heavens, and to have had strange dreams and mystic visions.

"O emir," said he, "be on your guard! Treason is around you, and in your path: your life is in peril. Beware of Count Julian and his family."

"Enough," said the emir. "They shall all die! Parents and children—all shall die!"

He forthwith sent a summons to Count Julian to attend him in Cordova. The messenger found him plunged in affliction for the recent death of his daughter. The count excused himself, on account of this misfortune, from obeying the commands of the emir in person, but sent several of his adherents. His hesitation, and the circumstance of his having sent his family across the straits to Africa, were construed by the jealous mind of the emir into proofs of guilt. He no longer doubted his being concerned in the recent insurrections, and that he had sent his family away, preparatory to an attempt, by force of arms, to subvert the Moslem domination. In his fury, he put to death Siseburto and Evan, the nephews of Bishop Oppas, and sons of the former king, Witiza, suspecting them of taking part in the treason. Thus did they expiate their treachery to their country in the fatal battle of the Gaudalete.

Alahor next hastened to Carthagena, to seize upon Count Julian. So rapid were his movements that the count had barely time to escape with fifteen cavaliers, with whom he took refuge in the strong castle of Marcuello, among the mountains of Arragon. The emir, enraged at being disappointed of his prey, embarked at Carthagena, and crossed the straits to Ceuta, to make captives of the Countess Frandina and her son.

The old chronicle from which we take this part of our legend, presents a gloomy picture of the countess in the stern fortress to which she had fled for refuge; a picture heightened by supernatural horrors. These latter the sagacious reader will admit or reject, according to the measure of his faith

and judgment; always remembering, that in dark and eventful times, like those in question, involving the destinies of nations, the downfal of kingdoms, and the crimes of rulers and mighty men, the hand of fate is sometimes strangely visible, and confounds the wisdom of the worldly wise, by intimations and portents above the ordinary course of things. With this proviso, we make no scruple to follow the venerable chronicler in his narration.

Now so it happened, that the Countess Frandina was seated late at night in her chamber in the citadel of Ceuta, which stands on a lofty rock, overlooking the sea. She was revolving, in gloomy thought, the late disasters of her family, when she heard a mournful noise, like that of the sea-breeze, moaning about the castle walls. Raising her eyes, she beheld her brother, the Bishop Oppas, at the entrance of the chamber. She advanced to embrace him, but he forbade her with a motion of his hand: and she observed that he was ghastly pale, and that his eyes glared as with lambent flames.

"Touch me not, sister," said he with a mournful voice, "lest thou be consumed by the fire which rages within me. Guard well thy son, for blood-hounds are upon his track. His innocence might have secured him the protection of heaven, but our crimes have involved him in our common ruin." He ceased to speak, and was no longer to be seen. His coming and going were alike without noise, and the door of the chamber remained fast bolted.

On the following morning, a messenger arrived with tidings that the Bishop Oppas had been made prisoner in battle by the insurgent Christians of the Asturias, and had died in fetters in a tower of the mountains. The same messenger brought word that the Emir Alahor had put to death several of the friends of Count Julian; had obliged him to fly for his life to a castle in Arragon, and was embarking with a formidable force for Ceuta.

The Countess Frandina, as has already been shown, was of courageous heart, and danger made her desperate. There were fifty Moorish soldiers in the garrison: she feared that they would prove treacherous, and take part with their countrymen. Summoning her officers, therefore, she informed them of their danger, and commanded them to put those Moors to death. The guards sallied forth to obey her orders. Thirty-five of the Moors were in the great square, unsus-

picious of any danger, when they were severally singled out by their executioners, and, at a concerted signal, killed on the spot. The remaining fifteen took refuge in a tower. They saw the armada of the emir at a distance, and hoped to be able to hold out until its arrival. The soldiers of the countess saw it also, and made extraordinary efforts to destroy these internal enemies, before they should be attacked from without. They made repeated attempts to storm the tower, but were as often repulsed with severe loss. They then undermined it, supporting its foundations by stanchions of wood. To these they set fire, and withdrew to a distance, keeping up a constant shower of missiles to prevent the Moors from sallying forth to extinguish the flames. The stanchions were rapidly consumed; and when they gave way the tower fell to the ground. Some of the Moors were crushed among the ruins; others were flung to a distance, and dashed among the rocks: those who survived were instantly put to the sword.

The fleet of the emir arrived at Ceuta about the hour of vespers. He landed, but found the gates closed against him. The countess herself spoke to him from a tower, and set him at defiance. The emir immediately laid siege to the city. He consulted the astrologer Yuza, who told him that, for seven days, his star would have the ascendant over that of the youth Alarbot; but after that time the youth would be safe from his power, and would effect his ruin.

Alahor immediately ordered the city to be assailed on every side, and at length carried it by storm. The countess took refuge with her forces in the citadel, and made a desperate defence; but the walls were sapped and mined, and she saw that all resistance would soon be unavailing. Her only thoughts now were to conceal her child. "Surely," said she, "they will not think of seeking him among the dead." She led him, therefore, into the dark and dismal chapel. "Thou art not afraid to be alone in this darkness, my child?" said she.

"No, mother," replied the boy, "darkness gives silence and sleep." She conducted him to the tomb of Florinda. "Fearest thou the dead, my child?" "No, mother, the dead can do no harm.—and what should I fear from my sister?"

The countess opened the sepulchre. "Listen, my son," said she. "There are fierce and cruel people who have come hither to murder thee. Stay here in company with

thy sister, and be quiet as thou dost value thy life!" The boy, who was of a courageous nature, did as he was bidden, and remained there all that day, and all the night, and the next day until the third hour.

In the meantime the walls of the citadel were sapped, the troops of the emir poured in at the breach, and a great part of the garrison was put to the sword. The countess was taken prisoner and brought before the emir. She appeared in his presence with a haughty demeanour, as if she had been a queen receiving homage; but when he demanded her son, she faltered, and turned pale, and replied, "My son is with the dead."

"Countess," said the emir, "I am not to be deceived; tell me where you have concealed the boy, or tortures shall wring from you the secret."

"Emir," replied the countess, "may the greatest torments be my portion, both here and hereafter, if what I speak be not the truth! My darling child lies buried with the dead."

The emir was confounded by the solemnity of her words; but the withered astrologer, Yuza, who stood by his side regarding the countess from beneath his bushed eyebrows, perceived trouble in her countenance and equivocation in her words. "Leave this matter to me," whispered he to Alahor; "I will produce the child."

He ordered strict search to be made by the soldiery, and he obliged the countess to be always present. When they came to the chapel, her cheek turned pale and her lip quivered. "This," said the subtle astrologer, "is the place of concealment."

The search throughout the chapel, however, was equally vain, and the soldiers were about to depart, when Yuza remarked a slight gleam of joy in the eye of the countess. "We are leaving our prey behind," thought he; "the countess is exulting."

He now called to mind the words of her asseveration, that her child was with the dead. Turning suddenly to the soldiers, he ordered them to search the sepulchres. "If you find him not," said he, "drag forth the bones of that wanton Cava, that they may be burnt, and the ashes scattered to the winds."

The soldiers searched among the tombs, and found that of Florinda partly open. Within lay the boy in the sound

sleep of childhood, and one of the soldiers took him gently in his arms to bear him to the emir.

When the countess beheld that her child was discovered, she rushed into the presence of Alahor, and, forgetting all her pride, threw herself upon her knees before him.

"Mercy! mercy!" cried she, in piercing accents, "mercy on my son—my only child! O emir! listen to a mother's prayer, and my lips shall kiss thy feet. As thou art merciful to him, so may the Most High God have mercy upon thee, and heap blessings on thy head!"

"Bear that frantic woman hence," said the emir, "but guard her well."

The countess was dragged away by the soldiery, without regard to her struggles and her cries, and confined in a dungeon of the citadel.

The child was now brought to the emir. He had been awakened by the tumult, but gazed fearlessly on the stern countenances of the soldiers. Had the heart of the emir been capable of pity, it would have been touched by the tender youth and innocent beauty of the child; but his heart was as the nether millstone, and he was bent upon the destruction of the whole family of Julian. Calling to him the astrologer, he gave the child into his charge with a secret command. The withered son of the desert took the boy by the hand, and led him up the winding staircase of a tower. When they reached the summit Yuza placed him on the battlements.

"Cling not to me, my child," said he, "there is no danger."

"Father, I fear not," said the undaunted boy; "yet it is a wondrous height!"

The child looked around with delighted eyes. The breeze blew his curling locks from about his face, and his cheek glowed at the boundless prospect; for the tower was reared upon that lofty promontory on which Hercules founded one of his pillars. The surges of the sea were heard far below beating upon the rocks, the sea-gull screamed and wheeled about the foundations of the tower, and the sails of lofty caraccas were as mere specks on the bosom of the deep.

"Dost thou know yonder land beyond the blue water?" said Yuza.

"It is Spain," replied the boy; "it is the land of my father and my mother."

"Then stretch forth thy hands and bless it, my child," said the astrologer.

The boy let go his hold of the wall, and, as he stretched forth his hands, the aged son of Ishmael, exerting all the strength of his withered limbs, suddenly pushed him over the battlements. He fell headlong from the top of that tall tower, and not a bone in his tender frame but was crushed upon the rocks beneath.

Alahor came to the foot of the winding stairs.

"Is the boy safe?" cried he.

"He is safe," replied Yuza; "come and behold the truth with thine own eyes."

The emir ascended the tower and looked over the battlements, and beheld the body of the child, a shapeless mass, on the rocks far below, and the sea gulls hovering about it; and he gave orders that it should be thrown into the sea, which was done.

On the following morning, the countess was led forth from her dungeon into the public square. She knew of the death of her child, and that her own death was at hand; but she neither wept nor supplicated. Her hair was dishevelled, her eyes were haggard with watching, and her cheek was as the monumental stone; but there were the remains of commanding beauty in her countenance; and the majesty of her presence awed even the rabble into respect.

A multitude of Christian prisoners were then brought forth; and Alahor cried out—"Behold the wife of Count Julian; behold one of that traitorous family which has brought ruin upon yourselves and upon your country." And he ordered that they should stone her to death. But the Christians drew back with horror from the deed, and said—"In the hand of God is vengeance, let not her blood be upon our heads." Upon this the emir swore, with horrid imprecations, that whoever of the captives refused should himself be stoned to death. So the cruel order was executed, and the Countess Frandina perished by the hands of her countrymen. Having thus accomplished his barbarous errand, the emir embarked for Spain, and ordered the citadel of Ceuta to be set on fire, and crossed the straits at night by the light of its towering flames.

The death of Count Julian, which took place not long after, closed the tragic story of his family. How he died remains

involved in doubt. Some assert that the cruel Alahor pursued him to his retreat among the mountains, and, having taken him prisoner, beheaded him; others that the Moors confined him in a dungeon, and put an end to his life with lingering torments; while others affirm that the tower of the castle of Marcuello, near Huesca, in Arragon, in which he took refuge, fell on him and crushed him to pieces. All agree that his latter end was miserable in the extreme, and his death violent. The curse of Heaven, which had thus pursued him to the grave, was extended to the very place which had given him shelter; for we are told that the castle is no longer inhabited, on account of the strange and horrible noises that are heard in it; and that visions of armed men are seen above it in the air; which are supposed to be the troubled spirits of the apostate Christians who favoured the cause of the traitor.

In after times a stone sepulchre was shown, outside of the chapel of the castle, as the tomb of Count Julian: but the traveller and the pilgrim avoided it, or bestowed upon it a malediction; and the name of Julian has remained a bye-word and a scorn in the land for the warning of all generations. Such ever be the lot of him who betrays his country!

Here end the legends of the conquest of Spain.

Written in the Alhambra, June 10, 1829.

NOTE TO THE PRECEDING LEGEND.

El licenciado Ardevines (Lib. ii. cap. 8) dize que dichos Duendos caseros, o los del aire, hazen aparacer exercitos y peleas, como lo que se cuenta por tradicion (y aun algunos personas lo deponen como testigos de vista) de la torre y castello de Marcuello, lugar al pie de las montañas de Aragon (aora inhabitable, por las grandes y espantables ruidos que en el se oyen) donde se retraxo el Conde Don Julian, causa de la perdicion de España; sobre el qual castillo, deze se ven en el aire ciertas visiones, como de soldados, que el vulgo dize son los cavalleros y gente que le favorecian.

Vide "El Ente Dislucidado, por Fray Antonio de Fuentalapeña, capuchin," seccion 3, subseccion 5, instancia 8, num. 614.

As readers unversed in the Spanish language may wish to

know the testimony of the worthy and discreet capuchin friar, Antonio de Fuentalapeña, we subjoin a translation of it.

"The licentiate Ardevines (Book ii. chap. 8) says that the said house fairies (or familiar spirits), or those of the air, cause the apparitions of armies and battles; such as those which are related in tradition, (and some persons even depose to the truth of them as eye-witnesses) of the town and castle of Marcuello, a fortress at the foot of the mountains of Arragon (at present uninhabitable, on account of the great and frightful noises heard in it), the place of retreat of Count Don Julian, the cause of the perdition of Spain. It is said that certain apparitions of soldiers are seen in the air, which the vulgar say are those of the courtiers and the people who aided him."

THE END.

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